

THE
GOSPEL RECOVERED
FROM ITS
CAPTIVE STATE,
AND RESTORED TO ITS
ORIGINAL PURITY.

BY A GENTILE CHRISTIAN.
IN SIX VOLUMES.

WROTE IN DEFENCE OF
WOUNDED AND DESPISED TRUTH.

May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know, therefore, what these things mean. Acts xvii. 19, 20.

And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts, —with false and absurd doctrines—brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. Acts xix. 18, 19.

By education, most have been misled:
They so believe, because they were so bred.
The priest continues what the nurse began:
And thus, the child imposes on the man.

V O L. VI.

L O N D O N:
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REPRODUCED FROM THE
ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

THE
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THE
GOSPEL RECOVERED
FROM ITS
CAPTIVE STATE.

BOOK XI.

DISSERTATION V.

Satan hearing of Christ's approach, and being afraid of his Empire, immediately devises devices against him.

THE subject next to be considered and treated upon, is that which is express by the prophets concerning the Messiah; who would set up a kingdom, which would utterly destroy and usher in the downfall and extirpation of Satan's empire from the human world. The news of this dismal report being therefore no sooner heard on the frontiers of Satan's kingdom, but immediately dispatches were sent forth through all the different territories thereof, with express orders, that spies be sent

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out, and sentinels placed in all the different kingdoms of the world, especially in Judea, where that dismal alarm took its first rise. And that upon the first approach of its coming to pass, returns be instantly sent to court, with as much expedition as possible, that proper methods may be taken to prevent the much feared consequence of this our eternal foe. Christ, therefore, no sooner made his appearance in the world, than his birth was proclaimed by angels, and ushered in by a multitude of the heavenly host, with anthems and acclamations of joy. The news thereof no sooner reached this sentinel placed in Judea, than he immediately sets out thereon with all expedition, till he arrives at court with the sad and fatal news, that the long dreaded event of the expected foe was come to pass. And thus he farther expresses himself with the following dismal account, saying, The invader is landed in Judea, attended by a numerous retinue, accompanied with a herald, proclaiming him not only king of Judea, but the great emperor of the world. This dreadful alarm was no sooner delivered, than orders were immediately issued out to summon in the chief members of that august court, to consult and take counsel concerning this important affair. All concerned therein being, therefore, now met together; but how dismal was the aspect! nothing but horror was to be seen in their countenances, and terror painted on every brow! Not knowing what to do, in the midst of this doubtful silence of the council, the

president expresses himself, saying, ' I suppose, ' said he, there is none in this assembly, here ' present, but knows the important concern ' of our meeting together. I expect by this ' time, it is no secret to any, but that all have ' heard the fatal news, and dismal account, ' that our kingdom is invaded by this long ' expected and irresistible foe, our present e- ' nemy, who hath already taken possession of ' Judea. It is therefore every one's interest ' in this august assembly, to search out for ' the most effectual means to disappoint and ' cut off this our grand enemy, that an end ' may be put to his most dangerous invasion; ' and that our kingdom and great empire ' may for ever be secured against all the at- ' tempts and assaults of this long expected ' foe.' At last Apollyon steps forth and gives his advice concerning this important affair; and thus he expresses himself, ' You all very ' well know, of its being the particular inte- ' rest of every supreme magistrate, to take care, ' and be aware against every seeming invasion ' made upon their rights and prerogatives. ' For this reason, it is, therefore, my opinion, ' that one be immediately dismissed, with all ' expedition, to Herod, the supreme magistrate ' of the country, and warn him against the ' present danger in which he now stands; and ' thereby inform and let him know, that his ' and our enemy is just now in possession of ' his realm, that he may immediately fall up- ' on measures to cut off this his and our eter- ' nal enemy.'

This missionary being no sooner arrived at Herod's court to inform him of his danger, and acquaint him of the invasion made upon his territories, but immediately he puts in execution that bloody tragedy, of slaying all the young children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, in order that this young prince might thereby fall among the rest, and be prevented from making his escape. So that, when Christ was an infant, infants suffered and died in virtue of that evil that was determined against him.

From hence, it may very justly be said, that these infants, though never so innocent, were the first that died martyrs on Christ's account. Thus Satan never thinks he has lost his design, when he maketh any one to fall; but however wise and deceitful he thought himself, through the long experienced knowledge he had in political affairs, yet in this he became a fool: for these little infants who died martyrs for Christ, were thereby prevented from being defiled by the different evils that so much abound in a probationary world; and might have thus fallen in, and become partakers with these abandoned wretches, that imbrued their hands in Christ the Redeemer's blood; and who, without repentance, would at last have went headlong to hell. But Joseph being warned of God in a dream, that Herod would seek to take away the young child's life; on which it is said, "Joseph rose up, and took the young child and his mother by night, and

went straight into Egypt," where he remained in safety, till Herod, that old rotten-hearted fox, was dead. Satan being now disappointed for a season, upon Christ's entering on his ministry, he there comes and attacks him personally, but to as little purpose now as in the former. Satan being, therefore, defeated in all his attacks, at last falls on a new device, wherein he might most effectually prevail against him in taking away his life, knowing the nature of that people, that none abounded in a greater degree of bigotry and superstition than they, especially the priests, of whom were the chief members of that supreme council; and being, therefore, no longer able to bear with Christ's ministry, by which the chief pillars of his kingdom were made to tremble, seeing his danger, and fearing a revolt, resolves to tarry no longer, but sets out in person and arrives at court, *viz.* the Jewish Sanhedrim, where he begins the following speech.

' My dear and worthy friends, you are by
' no means ignorant, that, in times of danger,
' my counsel was never yet wanting; and I
' think there was never more need for it than
' at this present juncture; seeing, if you let
' this impostor go on, he does not only appear
' to change the customs of your ancient religion,
' which hath been of so long standing,
' but if let alone, will even sap the foundations
' of government itself; by which the Romans
' will be offended, and thereby come
' and take away your place and nation.'

Thus Satan gave all manner of encouragement, assuring them they might expect his assistance, and should by no means lose their reward. After which advice, he sets out, in order that he might come up with Christ's disciples, intending, if possible, that one of them should become his most faithful friend to perform the office he intended. And coming to Judas, he enters into conversation with him, calling him fool for losing his time, in attending upon one from whom he could expect no reward; but bring him to the test, and thou shalt soon know the proof of what I have informed thee. Upon this advice, Judas immediately sets out, where he meets with a desirable reception, and bargains with the priests for thirty pieces of silver to deliver him into their hands; and to complete his agreement, he delivers him up according to paction. Against whom these perfidious wretches conspired, to condemn and take away his life; which was effected by that ungodly crew. The tragedy is now completed, the action finished, and he at last laid in the grave; but the power of death could not detain him; so that, after three days, he comes forth like a mighty conqueror, and gives more power than ever to his disciples, to triumph over this wicked and malignant deceiver. Satan, when in the midst of his apparent victory, again comes to be frustrated, and there met with an irrecoverable disappointment. For at the resurrection of Jesus, the Holy Spirit is sent forth with a full and complete victory over all the powers of darkness;

by which, Satan was now fully conquered, and, as a captive, led in triumph at the wheels of the everlasting gospel. All hopes being, therefore, now lost, and Satan himself become a conquered enemy, and utter ruin not only now threatened, but perceived already to be begun; and seeing his kingdom falling to pieces, and his case turning now desperate, he therefore studies, if possible, to stir up a rebellion against his antagonist in persecuting his subjects; and thus he continued and persisted in, for about the space of three hundred years; till at last, a total revolt is not only threatened, but immediately ensues, by means of Constantine the Great: so that, the chief pillars of that malignant kingdom now began to tremble. What ghastly aspects do we there see! nothing but terror to be seen in every visage, and paleness on every brow! Now at last Beelzebub himself stands forth in the midst of that great assembly, and addresses himself to the chief members of the grand council, saying, ‘ My dear and trusty subjects, you all know the greater the danger, the more need there is of counsel for safety, You all know that this is the long suspected event, which has now seized our dominion at last; and that with the irreparable ruin, downfall, and total extirpation of our empire, and government thereof. It is therefore not only required, but is also incumbent on every member of this great and venerable assembly, to act his part, and concert upon what measures will prove most effectual, for

‘ the interest and recovery of our lost empire;
‘ which we have been so lately dispossessed of
‘ by our grand enemy, who has set up his
‘ empire upon the ruins of ours.’ All, therefore, were now struck with an universal silence, till at last Apollyon rises up, stands forth, and delivers the following speech, in the midst of that august assembly:

‘ I apprehend, said he, things are not yet
‘ so desperate as you perceive them to be:
‘ One thing remains in our favours, of which
‘ I suppose no potentate in this venerable
‘ council are ignorant of, *viz.* the badge and
‘ seals of our grand enemies last will and testament; which are as follows.’ “ By this shall
“ all men know that ye are my disciples, if
“ ye have love one to another.” ‘ And this is
‘ the test or balance wherein these rebels, who
‘ have revolted from under our government,
‘ *viz.* each of his different subjects, are to be
‘ weighed. Now, you all likewise very well
‘ know, that when our grand enemy came to
‘ take possession of what he calls his empire,
‘ or rather to invade ours, he, in one of his
‘ observations when accused by the Jews,
‘ makes the following remark,’ “ Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to
“ desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand;” therefore, if either Christ’s or whatever kingdom, be divided against itself, it cannot
‘ stand, but of necessity must fall to pieces.
‘ Now, from this there is hope that all is
‘ not yet lost; but, it is, no doubt, our greatest

‘ interest, to pursue the same maxim observed by
‘ our grand enemy; therefore, let us divide,
‘ and not only divide, but subdivide them as
‘ much as possible, that this his kingdom or
‘ new empire, may be thus conquered and
‘ brought to an end. Yea, let us divide them
‘ into different parties, and turn their zeal a-
‘ gainst one another: for they have not as yet
‘ discovered the bottom of our policy, nor
‘ shaken off all their former prejudices. There
‘ are already different opinions among them;
‘ this will necessarily arise and be increased from
‘ the liberty they will take to judge for them-
‘ selves. And you all very well know, that
‘ when men are allowed to judge for them-
‘ selves, and think freely upon matters of re-
‘ ligion, they will unavoidably differ in many
‘ things; and thereby anathematize and per-
‘ secute each other.’

Thus that the above plan should be put in execution, was the united desire of that august court. One being chosen for that purpose to proceed in that important affair, *viz.* Apollyon, who never yet failed in pursuing his commission. Apollyon, by reason of his great wit, skill, and understanding, which he had acquired through a long experience in knowledge, being now chosen and advanced to the high office and dignity of dictator (to whom Belial was constituted prime minister of state); expresses himself in the following words.

‘ I suppose, said he, there is none in this
‘ great and venerable assembly, but what

‘ knows that the emperors always proved our
‘ best friends, until this one now present, who
‘ has revolted from our standard, taken part
‘ with the invader of our empire, and there-
‘ by declared himself our enemy.’ And thus
he continues his speech.

‘ In considering the present state of our af-
‘ fairs, my counsel is, than Mammon be im-
‘ mediately sent with all expedition, to inform
‘ the emperor how much the christians, espe-
‘ cially the bishops, have suffered and been
‘ harrassed under the former emperors;
‘ and that it is now high time they should be
‘ rewarded with rich falleries, and revenues
‘ suitable to their different stations, and dig-
‘ nities in which they are placed. And that
‘ Mammon, with the assistance of his old
‘ friend Belial, prime minister to Apollyon,
‘ under the conduct of Lucifer, be immedi-
‘ ately sent to the bishops also; so that, when
‘ these gentlemen have arrived at that high pitch
‘ of riches and grandeur, that are suitable to
‘ the subjects of our realm, he may be ready to
‘ inspire them with such degrees of pride, ma-
‘ lice, and ambition, as to enable them to hate,
‘ bite, devour, and lord over one another.
‘ There must likewise be express orders sent to
‘ those of our most cunning and able politici-
‘ ans, to inspire some of the most respectable
‘ bishops with the device of some new opini-
‘ ons, altogether disputable in their nature;
‘ such as can never possibly be understood,
‘ viz. such as the pedigree of our grand ene-
‘ my. And the more dark, intricate, and

‘ obscure, their conceptions and opinions are,
‘ just all that more to our purpose. And so soon
‘ as they begin to vend or retail their new
‘ opinions, some of said clergy will, no doubt,
‘ come to oppose them, which will soon cause
‘ a general meeting of his constituents, the
‘ clergy. Now, by this time they will be ar-
‘ rived at such a pitch of pride and arrogance,
‘ that the one side will not yield nor give place
‘ to the other. And as the infallible stand-
‘ ard, wherewith christianity had been former-
‘ ly signed and made the test thereof, and like-
‘ wise the balance wherein it had been weigh-
‘ ed (which is, “ By this shall all men know
“ that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to
“ another”), ‘ was appointed thereto by its great
‘ Master. Now, this scale which has been
‘ found sufficient for the space of three hun-
‘ dred years past, will be found altogether in-
‘ sufficient for weighing of these new opini-
‘ ons, which will be added to the former. And
‘ as our grand enemy has left them no other
‘ test than what is here exprest in the above,
‘ one or more must, therefore, be sent to ac-
‘ quaint them, that we can serve them with a
‘ complete standard, consisting of all different
‘ kinds of weights; on which information,
‘ they will, no doubt, immediately apply to
‘ us to be served as in the foregoing. And
‘ this I will, that missionaries be therefore sent
‘ among them, with all immediate speed, to
‘ acquaint them of our assistance as in the a-
‘ bove.’

Beelzebub now perceiving the utility of such a deep laid plan, and rising up in the presence of that most august and venerable assembly, returns Apollyon ten thousand compliments for such a well digested scheme for defeating the enemy and recovering our lost empire. And to this he adds, that 'None were more fit for carrying on the above plan, than our best friend Apollyon, by whom it has been laid down; therefore, I will that it be immediately put in practice with all expedition.'

Apollyon now receiving orders to put in execution the above plan, and that he should therefore make choice of whomsoever he pleased in that venerable assembly to go along with him on said expedition; and who was this, but even Satan, and his old friend and intimate acquaintance Belial. These three potentates, upon taking leave of the court, immediately set out on this important affair. And arriving at Alexandria, the principal or chief seat of learning at that period in the christian world; and passing some short space of time, waiting an opportunity to insinuate themselves into some of the principal clergy or chief bishops, concerning some dark and intricate points in their religion altogether disputable; which accordingly was done.

Next day, Alexander, the chief bishop in that city, appearing at the head of his presbyters, and discoursing somewhat more boldly than usual concerning what they called a Trinity, of one being three, and of three being one; and that the Deity consisted of three distinct persons

undivided, equally invested in parts of the Godhead. Arius a presbyter being present, and hearing this discourse, immediately comes to oppose and attack him thereon, as being a doctrine altogether inconsistent, and never so much as heard of before in the christian church, but by Sabellius. Arius now ran into the other extreme; and upon this a hot dispute ensued. Nor did the contest end here—No; for one part of the bishops and clergy falling in with the one side, and the other with the other side, each side adhered most tenaciously to these opposite opinions in which they were engaged, till at last a general council was called to meet at Nice, in the 19th or 20th of May 325. This council was no sooner called, than the three courtiers, *viz.* Apollyon, with his two companions, Satan and Belial, who had made some stay at Alexandria, immediately set out for, and arrived at Nice; where they transformed themselves into angels of light, that they might the better insinuate themselves into favour with the bishops and other clergy, unto whom they were to give counsel, in directing them to proper measures for their own advantage.

The counsel being now met, they inspired each thereof, *viz.* the emperor, with the bishops and other clergy, with such sentiments as might best agree and suit with their own interest. The questions which were the occasional cause of this general meeting were warmly disputed on both sides of this divided assembly; but could by no means be brought

to an issue or agreement. Each party dogmatically asserted the opinion of his party; but could produce no infallible argument in proof thereof. Which opinions, *viz.* those advanced by Alexander and his party, certainly exceeded the utmost limits of revelation itself, to decide or determine the question, which had occasioned the foresaid dispute. And as neither party having a proper test to determine this incomprehensible mystery, it was, therefore, now high time to look out for a decision. Search being, therefore, now made for one to determine the above query, Beelzebub no sooner hearing of what progress his three principal officers had made at Alexandria, but he immediately sets out with his attendants; where he there meets with them at Nice, hovering over that place like a thick fog, attended with some different peals of thunder; and then at last descended in the appearance of angels of light, that they might the better infuse themselves into the minds of the clergy, to inspire them with designs suitable for the purpose they intended. Apollyon having for some time frequented this general council or assembly, therefore, got into favour with some of its particular members; and, very like himself, offers them his assistance in this mysterious and important affair; which offer was no sooner made, but was immediately embraced at this critical juncture; and accordingly he addresses them as follows.

‘My Lords, we are now sent, and are likewise come to your assistance, in order to give

‘ counsel and direction to you, concerning
‘ this mysterious business. And as you have
‘ never as yet been possess’d of a proper standard
‘ to decide such critical mysteries, we, with
‘ the assistance of our great Master, and his
‘ associates the heavenly powers, do hereby
‘ make you the offer, to provide you in one
‘ to decide all obscure or hard questions that
‘ may arise or take place among you for the
‘ future. And shall also furnish you in a re-
‘ gular custom-house, establishing proper of-
‘ ficers for your assistance, with a complete
‘ standard or set of weights, twenty in num-
‘ ber, sufficient for weighing and deciding all
‘ kinds of mysteries or hard questions, that
‘ may arise or come before you for the future,
‘ as in the above.’ The major part of the
bishops and other clergy now supposed them-
selves, by virtue of the above promise, suffi-
ciently warranted for making articles of faith,
whose number consisted of twenty, as taken
notice of in the foregoing. And that who-
ever will not submit to these articles of faith,
to be weighed in this balance, shall be expel-
led the christian church. The majority of
the bishops and other clergy having, therefore,
got the authority of the emperor, or supreme
magistrate, upon their side; and, under a
pretence or cloak of pious zeal, therefore, came
to brand the minority with error and heresy,
and that even of the deepest dye. The ma-
jority having, therefore, obtained the victory,
now come to oppose the minority, and dis-
possess them of their livings. Satan now ob-

tains his design in dispossessing the christian world of that peace and love it had so long time enjoyed, by the appointment of its great master: for instead of harmony there is nothing but wrath, strife, and persecution. Instead of loving, they now come to waste, hate, and devour up one another. Instead of bearing one another's burdens, they now come to accuse and condemn one another.

But to proceed, Apollyon having, therefore, now prevailed in all his undertakings, but still left unrewarded, Beelzebub now comes at last to set up the standard (or custom-house), which he had before promised to establish with a full and complete charter, endued with all necessary authority, reserving the oversight thereof, with the comptrollership, to himself, confirmed the clerkship on Apollyon, being a reward suitable to his penetration and deep laid schemes, which had proved so effectual for his interest. And as for Belial, says he, he shall be invested with an unlimited commission or power, to make seizures wherever he can find or discover them, namely, all such as have not taken out cockets and proper clearances from this our established custom-house. And it is also required, that all duties arising from whatever articles belonging to this our new custom-house, now established, shall be paid unto us, on purpose to support and reward our best friends, that are employed in attending thereupon.

Having got the whole established by the

civil power, its charter being now extended and ratified in Lucifer's register, consisting of twenty different canons or articles of faith, which would be too tedious to mention in this place; but for brevity's sake, I shall, therefore, take notice only of one of said number as a specimen of the rest, and is as follows, *viz.* celibacy, namely that no clergyman has liberty to marry. This canon received more strength towards the latter end of the fourth century; but was put in full force and confirmed in the thirteenth. The scope of said prohibition of marriage to the clergy, has certainly been attended with the worst of consequences. One of which catalogue I shall here instance, and is as follows.

In Italy, near to one of their convents or nunneries, a certain great personage had a fish-pond; and with a view to be served with the fishes in said pond, he let off its water; and in which pool, when dried, was found therein no less than six thousand of childrens or infants skulls, or upwards, which had been all murdered by, or at the instigation of the clergy, *viz.* the priests or consecrated gentlemen.

Hence, nor did this evil stop here—No: for these strolling locusts, the priests, in pursuing the profession of father confessors, in disposing of, and selling out absolutions to the people, have access, even from the lowest, up to the best or first rate families, his majesty's not excepted, in their privately requiring and ex-

torting confessions, not to speak of men, but from the women, and ladies of all ranks by themselves alone. From which it is reported, and perhaps not without reason, that many, not only of the lowest, but of the best or first rate families in the Catholic countries, even from the peasant up to the throne itself, are the posterity and descendents of priests. On which account, it is not only surprising, but even astonishing, of governments admitting of these strolling locusts to come and enter into their bed-chambers (like those frogs and other reptiles, which are said to have overspread the land of Egypt, and did enter into Pharaoh's), in making a prey of silly women, without castrating every soul of these deceitful vagabonds, before they admit of them to have such domestic access, as in the above. Further, and to return,

The above charter, consisting of twenty different canons or articles of faith, was now signed and ratified by the bishops and other clergy: all of which were composed and drawn up by men of fallible hearts, and, in every respect, as fallible heads; they not daring to set on the seals of infallibility, but supplying it by impressing the term orthodoxy on all the above articles. All was therefore now established and sealed up with authority, as if equal in weight and quality with infallibility itself. No more was added thereunto, till one Augustine, bishop of Hippo, towards the latter end of the fourth century, who, through some enthusiastic notions, made himself believe that

he had new revelations made unto him; but could give no just proof for the authority of these revelations he supposed were made unto him. But meeting with the approbation of the credulous members of the above office, or new establishment, they were all taken in and added to the former catalogue. This new additional number of articles of faith being as follows, *viz.* original sin; predestination; reprobation; particular or personal election; irresistible grace; grace without works or duties of the gospel; the doctrine of perseverance, or once in favour never out of favour; that man has no free will, and can do nothing that is good or acceptable in the sight of God; therefore, has no ability in performing any thing that may appear useful towards his own reformation or salvation. These new canons, or articles of faith, were all added to the above number, under the seals of the foregoing, namely that of orthodoxy. Hence, and to proceed,

The subordinate officers of said customs, *viz.* the clergy, were not satisfied with what articles of faith were added to the former and entered in their book of rates. But the comptroller still encouraged the bishops and other clergy to add unto the former articles. Next articles to be entered in said books, were of a number of saints, with the dedication of a holy-day in remembrance of each in said catalogue. Likewise, that prayers be made thereunto; and that statues be erected and set up in every

church, for a more lively impressi^on thereof upon the minds of the people, that they may likewise worship and adore each thereof, as little deities substituted by the order of heaven.

Further, ' We ordain, that by their intercession, each may have a full and complete admittance into heaven above. And also, that a certain number of angels be entered upon the records of this our custom-house, that they may pray to, and adore them, and pay divine homage, and worship them for intercessors also. And likewise, that a prohibition be laid upon certain kinds of meats, that none of them be eaten, but at such and such seasons; and that these may be entered in the foresaid books. And also, that there may be a purgatory, or refining house (or in other words, what may be rather stiled the Pope's bleachfield), established by authority, where the souls of the dead are to remain till fit for heaven. And also, that prayers be made by the priests or clergy for each thereof, on their friends paying money to these consecrated gentlemen, in releasing their souls from said prison; and for defraying the expence of preparing them, as in the above. And likewise, that the same be recorded in the register or books appointed for that office. And we also, therefore, positively require, that by our authority, an inquisition be established and set up, for punishing and tormenting, even unto death, all such as will not qualify, and take out

‘ proper clearances and cockets from this our
‘ custom-house. This given under our hands,
‘ at Pandemonium, to be put in execution by
‘ the bishops and other clergy, our constitu-
‘ ents, at Rome, and all such as shall adhere
‘ to their procedure as infallible in all time
‘ coming.’

Whatever formerly passed under the seals of orthodoxy, has now acquired and received the authority of infallibility. By falsely claiming the title, and assuming the power of which, millions, who, by refusing to be weighed in the balance or appointed standard of that diabolical custom-house, and found wanting by not taking out proper clearances and cockets therefrom, have been tormented, even unto death, by many hellish, inconceivable, and cruel tortures. And all of which executed only by those who presumptuously call themselves not only christians, but Christ’s best friends

From hence, as exprest in the foregoing, “ By this shall all men know that ye are
“ my disciples, if ye have love one to ano-
“ ther.” But from this, on the other hand, shall all men know that ye are not my disciples, but the disciples of the unjust and wicked one (who was a murderer from the beginning, namely, from his beginning to be a devil), because ye persecute, hate, bite, and devour up one another. This ever was, and ever will be, the production of a blind, pharisaical, over-heated, and misguided zeal. The christian religion, for the space of the three

first centuries, abounded in a state of peace, harmony and love; but was now, by the agency of these infernal powers, converted into that which may rather be called a bloody shamble or slaughter-house; and that, too, neither by Turks nor Pagans—No; but only by those of its own members; and those, too, who stile themselves its profest, pure, and best friends.

By this time Satan had now attained to the summit of his design and expected wish, in making christianity become a spectacle to the world; so that, by these bloody and inhuman scenes of murder, persecution, and other devices, some of her members were so much tired and worn out, by reason of her corruptions, that they protested against her upon account of her gross abominations, *viz.* her adulteries, her murders, her idolatries, and other wickedness, to which she had given up herself to work with all manner of greediness; of which protesters were Luther, Zuinglius, Melancthon, and Calvin.

Thesereformers had no sooner declared themselves against that Antichristian beast, and monster of wickedness, than the dismal alarm of their rebellion reached the metropolis, *viz.* the city of Pandemonium; upon which a centinel was immediately dispatched (by order of the Muster-master General of the forces in Beelzebub's kingdom) with the disagreeable news to Rome, where all these infernal powers of darkness were generally convened and met together, that they might associate with their best friends and trusty subjects, namely

the Pope, Cardinals, Bishops, and other clergy, these most enormous and insatiable devouring beasts of prey. Who no sooner came thither, and arrived at Antichrist's gate, where all these powers were assembled in the great Rotunda, than an herald proclaims, three times, aloud, saying, That a revolt had taken place in the northern part of their dominions; and that not only among the soldiery alone, but even some of their principal officers and standard-bearers in the army. On which report, a profound silence ensues; and nothing but confusion to be seen in every countenance. Now at last Apollyon steps forth, and addresses himself to that august council, assembled as in the above, and thus expresses himself in the following words.

' Dread sovereigns! ye mighty potentates
' and gods of the sky! I am much afraid of
' the consequence of this rebellion, and of our
' grand enemy being at their head; yet, still
' there is hope that all is not yet lost. Therefore,
' be not too much disconsolate, but let
' us endeavour to secure the possession of what
' still remains, and prevent these rebels, the
' reformers, from proceeding any farther, on
' a belief that all is well; and let us divide
' them into different parties, and turn their
' zeal against one another. They have not
' yet discovered the bottom of our policy, nor
' shaken off all their former prejudices—No.
' And although they have departed and given
' up with their former standard, and have set
' out for liberty, they will not altogether de-

‘ part from the laws of our realm. And for
‘ our better hope and encouragement, they
‘ have been born and bred up in and under
‘ the statutes, rules, and laws, of our constitu-
‘ tion. And though they should set aside some
‘ of the most glaring articles, and appear at
‘ present to emerge therefrom, they will soon
‘ relapse, and return again to that from which
‘ they seem to have fled, and thereby set up
‘ a second standard or, custom-house of their
‘ own; to which, let us not be wanting to
‘ furnish them with in proper officers, to assist
‘ in carrying on the business for our particular
‘ interest.’

‘ Further, they must likewise have advice
‘ in what manner they are to proceed and act
‘ towards all such as break through or disre-
‘ gard the rules of their new custom-house,
‘ which will certainly be appointed, as in the
‘ above.’

‘ Further, and that there likewise be a place
‘ of punishment, *viz.* a second inquisition,
‘ established and set up by authority of law,
‘ that every transgressor, who is guilty in
‘ not taking out a proper clearance and cocket,
‘ as shall be appointed by the laws of their
‘ establishment, for paying the fees of such as
‘ are members of said office; and also, that
‘ all frauds, and such as refuse to be subject
‘ to the different rules established therein, may
‘ be punished in the severest manner, accord-
‘ ing as the nature of their crime or transgres-
‘ sion will admit. And that all these be re-
‘ presented to their view, and set before them

‘ in the most advantageous light; by which,
‘ it is therefore hoped, they will soon comply
‘ with our insinuations and institutions.’

And to return,

These reformers having now separated themselves from the most palpable and glaring abominations of that enormous beast and monster of wickedness, set out under an intention of returning to the true and perfect light; but, alas! their great loss and misfortune was, that they, in being born and bred up under these abominations, which they, through a prepossession got through the prejudice of education, were naturally confirmed therein. From which cause, some of whom came to stop in their progress of the reformation, and thereby satisfied themselves in what they had already done; which was in lopping off the fringes from the dress of their harlot mother, *viz.* the ceremonies, but retained her doctrines; of whom was Mr. John Calvin and others, who, with him, had so lately emerged from out of such gross darkness; supposing to themselves, that when the sun came to appear a little above the horizon (*viz.* the light of the reformation), that he was come to his full meridian height. Just like Peter, when he saw Christ’s transfiguration upon the mount, “Come,” says he, “let us build here three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias.” He, poor man, *viz.* Peter, did not know at that time what was the nature of Christ’s kingdom, or the light of the glorious gospel, taught

by Jesus Christ for the good and salvation of men. So that, upon the discovery of the small glimpse he there saw, he was willing to sit down, and there make his abode.

Hence, in like manner, Calvin had no sooner emerged from out of Popish darkness, and drawn towards the dawning, or morning light of the reformation, than he immediately falls to making a confession or system of faith, by which he thereby greatly obstructed the light of the reformation sun, in rising to its meridian splendour. Thus, he had no sooner rejected the old constitution, from whence he came, but on this he immediately erects and sets up his new standard, which was almost an entire transcript of the government and doctrines of the old, or former custom-house, from which he had so lately departed; only with some small corrections, viz. the lopping off the fringes from the dress of the officers employed in said office. The charter of this new or second custom-house was, therefore, now filled up with all the different articles and rites contained therein, with an inquisition adapted to the old plan, empowered with a full and complete authority to punish every transgressor of said office or constitution, even unto death. And likewise, that no person shall have liberty to be a free subject of his or their realm, but only such as shall obey and take out proper cockets and clearances, containing all the different articles contained in this their new established constitution. And also, that all such as shall be found in this

their realm, as have not taken out a proper clearance, containing therein all the different articles of this his new established constitution, shall either be expelled their dominions, or punished by law, according as the nature of their crime will admit.

Hence, this new constitution was, therefore, now finished, and furnished with officers in places according to their different stations, and Mr. John Calvin at the head thereof, with his new inquisition, and inquisitors placed therein by his authority. This inquisition is his book wrote by himself, *viz.* Calvin, concerning the punishing (of such as did not conform) and of putting heretics to death. This, no doubt, was the production of a most Pharisaical, blind, misguided, and fiery zeal; a zeal which is not according to godliness, but of that wicked and ungodly spirit; a spirit altogether inconsistent with christianity or gospel of Christ, but quite consistent with the spirit of these powers of darkness, from whence he came, and from whom he held his diploma, for persecuting of others for not holding the same sentiments with himself, but others different from those of his own. Further, and to proceed,

We shall here take notice how far this new custom-house or constitution, comes short of the former: the particulars are as follows, *viz.* celibacy; the veneration paid to in worshipping of saints and angels; of idolatry; of purgatory; transubstantiation, and the like. The

above are a specimen of the many more too tedious to mention. Each officer in this new constitution, therefore, received his commission, with orders and authority concerning his business, in looking for and making of captures, or seizures, wherever they may be found in this our realm, or in the different seas or borders belonging thereto. That all such as have not made their entry, and taken out a proper cocket and clearance therefrom, shall be seized upon, and tried in this our new inquisition, according to law; and shall be punished with as much severity as the nature of their crimes will admit of.

The above articles being now ratified, and given at Geneva, blank day, blank date, by our authority; all being now finished, but none more active and zealous in all their different stations, for making captures, than Mr. John Calvin himself; who, hearing of one (who as he supposed) that had taken too much freedom in speaking against his new custom-house or constitution, especially against some of the first articles thereof, or rather what he had retained of the old. Against whom he resolved, that if he should be found either within or nigh the borders of his territories, he should be seized upon, and made the first example, that others may fear and take warning for the future.

The person of whom I now speak was one Michael Servetus a physician, against whom he, *viz.* Calvin, had wrote to Lyons in France, where he, *viz.* Servetus, was at that time

a corrector of the press, desiring the Papists, his old steady friends in that city, to apprehend him; on whose information, he was there cast into prison. But at last he made his escape, and, as a private person, was on his way to Italy, and passing through Geneva; and, though neither dealing in wholesale nor in retail, neither in customed, nor uncusommed goods, or articles of whatever kind in their realm, nor exposing so much as the least article contained in their book of rates, putting up at the Rose Inn, intending next day to go by water; but before to-morrow he was made a captive, and siezed upon as a lawful prize, by the order and authority of the comptroller of this new established custom-house. Servetus was now taken up and committed into the inquisition-prison, and there arrested till brought to trial; and after arraigned before the bar of that court, where he was accused for high treason, for not making his entry, and for dealing in articles contained in their book of rates, without taking out a proper clearance or cocket from this their custom-house. This being done at the instigation of Mr. John Calvin, comptroller or grand inquisitor of that establishment, by whom he, *viz.* Servetus, was indicted, as in the above. A day was now appointed for the different members of this grand inquisition to meet, on purpose to bring on the trial of Michael Servetus, for not entering and taking out a clearance from their custom-house; and yet dealing in articles contained

therein. The day appointed being now come for these new inquisitors, the different members of Beelzebub's black tribunal, to meet, every one appearing and taking his place according to his different station, now came on the trial of said prisoner.

Michael Servetus being now led forth as a criminal, and produced before court, in order to take his trial; where he now stands a pannel arraigned before the bar, where he stands surrounded in the midst of his accusers, that infernal band, his wretched foes, of whom the members of that grand inquisition were composed. He was not so much as admitted the liberty of one to speak in his behalf. His indictment being therefore now read, many grievous accusations were there brought against him by these inquisitors, his accusers; who were fully resolved, like the Jews against Christ, to have judgment against him, in order that they might put him to death. These purblind zealots thus conspired against him, that they might take away his life. And in this they agree, that he should die; and thus they proceed. 'By this our definitive sentence, 'which we give in writing, we condemn thee, 'Michael Servetus, to be bound and carried 'to the place called Champel, and there to be 'fastened to a post, and to be burnt alive, till 'thy body be consumed by fire, and reduced 'to ashes. And thus thou shalt end thy days, 'to give an example to others who would do 'the like, in not entering and taking out a 'clearance from this our custom-house, and

‘ cockets for the different articles contained
‘ in our book of rates. And thus we, the in-
‘ quisitors of this our new inquisition, com-
‘ mand you, our lieutenant, to cause our pre-
‘ sent sentence to be put in execution.’ The
above bloody sentence was past by that cruel,
inhuman, and ungodly crew, the inquisitors,
at Geneva, on the 26th, and put in execution
on the 27th of October, 1553 years.

Thus Servetus, that unfortunate physician,
ended his days on Champel, or Champey, a
small eminence, about a musket shot from
Geneva, which was then the common place of
execution. The historian says he had the cu-
riosity to visit the spot, hardly known to any
traveller; and to see the very ground on which
Servetus expired in the flames. And thus
Servetus ended his life, and was the first that
fell a sacrifice, and whose blood was shed to
consecrate this new inquisition, established and
set up at Geneva, by Mr. John Calvin. Thus
Servetus had no sooner escaped the first beast,
than he immediately fell a sacrifice, or prey,
to the second.

The great Grotius, reflecting on the above
bloody scene or tragedy, had sufficient reason
to say, that “ the bloody and persecuting spi-
rit of antichrist did not only appear, but did
reign, at Geneva, as well as at Rome.” Lu-
bien Jesius makes the following remarks upon
this bloody execution or tragedy.

“ This was indeed, says he, a cruel act;
and, in the opinion of all good men, directly
repugnant to the gentle and humble spirit of

Christ, but perfectly agreeable to the temper and spirit of devils. That Calvin not only completed this villany, but thought it necessary to vindicate himself, and publish a piece, wherein he undertook to prove (though after a very weak and silly manner), that heretics have no right to life; therefore, ought to be put to death. That piece had for its title, what he called, *A faithful exposition of the errors of Michael Servetus, and a brief confutation of the same; in which is shewn, that heretics are to be punished with fire and sword.*"

Varillas affirms, "that there is at Paris an original letter of Calvin to Farel, written in 1546, which was never printed; and that these words are to be found in it, the tenour of which is as follows. 'Servetus has lately writ to me, and sent me at the same time a large book, stuffed with idle fancies, and full of arrogance. He says I shall find in it admirable things, and such as have been hitherto unheard of. He offers to come hither if I like it; but I will not engage my word: for if he comes, and if any regard be had to my authority, I shall not suffer him to escape without losing his life.' Sorbier mentions the same letter, and says, that Grotius saw it at Paris, and that these words were in it, 'I am informed that Servetus is coming hither on purpose to have some conversation with me. If I have any influence on the magistrates of Geneva, I will take effectual care that he never goes from hence alive.'

Hence, whoever will carefully read the history of Servetus, and the concurrent conduct of Calvin all along, will be tempted to imagine, that Calvin copied after Saul the persecutor, and not after St. Paul the apostle of the beneficent Jesus. If Mr. Calvin died in this temper, it cannot be said he died a christian—No: for the apostle freely owns himself to be of the class of the chief of sinners; or, in other words, to have been a very wicked man; and that, had he not repented of his blasphemy and persecution, and been converted in the genius of his soul, he could not have obtained mercy: for he that would persecute or be hurtful to another, either in person, interest, or estate, on account of his religious sentiments or opinions, if not hurtful to the state, is, in every respect, as far from being saved by the gospel as the brutes that perish. For till once they unfeignedly repent, and turn from persisting therein, the damned spirits can as possibly be saved by the gospel as they.

Hence, it is, therefore, now evident, that though Calvin caused the Papacy of Rome to be banished out of Geneva; nevertheless, he established there a Papacy of his own, that, as there was a Pope at Rome, so he, *viz.* Calvin, was no other than an express Pope at Geneva, not only by establishing an infallibility in the very constitution of that church, but by his maintaining and carrying on of that constitution, together with his own authority, by persecution and blood; of which, the his-

tory of Servetus will afford sufficient demonstration, and undeniable proofs. Now, what is all this, but only the changing of one beast for another?

From hence, it is, therefore, now evident, that Calvin (from his procedure against Servetus) may be stiled the second beast, who was, in every respect, as rapacious and given to blood as the first, from whence he came.

Thus, though Calvin cut off the fringes, *viz.* the ceremonies, of the church of Rome, and gave up with many gross enormous corruptions of said church, he still retained her bloody and persecuting spirit; which, of all errors, is certainly the worst, and even the most capital part of Popery.

Hence, it was out of a pretended sanctity, and a zeal for what they feignedly call the glory of God, that both Calvin, his constituents, and every other blood-thirsty animal, or member of that rapacious beast, have carried on their persecutions against christians, in shedding the blood of the innocent, contrary to the gospel of Christ. And though people may, from an enthusiastic delusion, and misguided zeal for the glory of God, and pretended love to Jesus Christ, act as in the above, they not only deceive themselves, but are, in express words, enemies to both God and man, by acting contrary, or rather in despite of the will of God, required of us by Jesus Christ for the good of men. But further,

The above custom-house and inquisition-court, established at Geneva by Mr. John Cal-

vin, was no sooner consecrated with the blood of Michael Servetus, and heard of through the different parts of Europe, but immediately orders were dispatched, not only from diverse courts in Germany, but likewise from Great Britain itself, for extracts of that new established constitution, and inquisition annexed thereto. And that copies were to be taken therefrom, with an exact account of the different articles contained therein, that each might set up their new establishment, and inquisition joined thereto, according to the tenour of the above plan. The clergy in both thereof, *viz.* south and north Britain, were sometime hence advertised to meet and send committees to Westminster in London, the great metropolis, to consult about the nature of this foreign plan, to which, when met together, they all agreed; and before being dismissed, they laid the foundation and raised the superstructure of this new constitution, and inquisition annexed thereto, with all the different articles and customs of the former, which was planned out and established at Geneva by Mr. John Calvin, from whom they held their charter. But so soon as the English clergy came to look into the vestry, and see how much their robes were stript, not only of the fringes, but also of the lace: and as they were used to go in finery, they soon came to object against that procedure. On the other hand, the Scotch clergy being entirely willing to go in this plain dress or coat, as it had been

finished off by Calvin, desired to be clothed therewith. But the English clergymen though they parted with the fringes, yet, through their nigardliness of spirit, would not so much as part with the lace, not knowing to what purpose it could be applied, when torn from the dress. So that, the clergy in both nations agreed about the dress, but differed widely about the mounting of the coat in which they were drest. The English clergy choosing to go in their finery, as becomes those who are near to the court; the favour of which they soon came to gain on account of their rich attire, and gayness of dress, which is always respected, and of high esteem among those of courtiers and great men. By which they soon came to gain the favour of court, and sanction of the civil law; and thereby established a new constitution and inquisition of their own, similar to that of the former; only, with this difference, *viz.* the lace and embroidery upon their vestments.

But, in order to inform our reader what is here meant by the coat or dress, exprest in the foregoing, I shall therefore take the liberty of the following digression, and thereby shew what christianity was, in its original or native dress. Thus we are informed by the evangelists, that Christ's coat or vesture was of one piece, woven without seam from the top throughout. On this account, the Roman soldiers, being unwilling it should be divided, said one to another, " Let us not rent it, but let us rather cast lots for it, and see whose it shall

be." And for the space of three hundred years or upwards, his church, though much corrupted, never appeared in another dress, but in the above garb, *viz.* a plain vail or garment, all of one piece, like that of its master, till about the beginning of the fourth century, when the emperor turned christian, and Paganism got its deadly wound. The clergy then having a certain revenue allotted them by the emperor, independent of the precarious and niggardly supply or allowance of the people, soon became rich; and therefore, the more vain and gaudy. All of which appeared thro' a desire of their being fashionable in their dress (*viz.* their ceremonies): an account of which I shall here relate. The old apparel being thought unfashionable, a new habit was therefore required: the materials of which were the produce of the city of Alexandria in Africa, from whence they were imported, and manufactured at Nice, a city in Bithynia; where this coat was both carded, spun, woven, dressed, shaped, and sewed, by three hundred and eighteen bishops, or rather mechanics, in the year 325. Eighteen or twenty of the foresaid number of manufacturers, objected against the dressing of the cloth of said coat; but others said it was made with its wrong side out. About which, there arose an endless and irreconcilable dispute; a contest which has never been yet solved unto this day. This coat was therefore now finished, and laid up in the vestry of the church, *viz.* the records of their proceedings; and likewise, by authority of

government, no bishop or clergyman whatever, should be seen in any other dress, than in that of the above coat, on pain of being expelled his place, and sent into exile or banishment for life. And also that the laity observe and appear in no other dress than in that of the clergy. The major part of said gentlemen, depended altogether on whatever side the emperor stood affected thereto; and continued so by turns, always turning out that side of the coat respected by the emperor. This coat being under the hard and indiscreet usage of so many different masters, it therefore became so bare, scuffed, and shabby, in appearance, that Augustin, bishop of Hippo, in the latter end of the fourth century, or beginning of the fifth, dressed it up a-new, with an inner vest sewed in said coat, in place of new lining. And after Augustin, the church of Rome was the next and nearest heir to said coat. But they not being satisfied with the plainness of its dress, or fashion in which it was made up, it therefore no sooner became their own, than they set a-working fringes, for laying around its under border. And after one row of fringes, another or second row of ornaments was added to those of the former. Thus they fell a garnishing the old Nicean coat or garment every century; and from the third down to the fifteenth or sixteenth, were still adding to its former gait. Each century was still adding unto said coat new ornaments, consisting of all manner of rich lace, embroidered with gold and silver, and its buttons were made of

precious stones, set in pure and massy gold. In a word, the whole of said apparel was almost altogether laid over with rich lace, in the gayest manner. In short, it was decked in such a rich and gaudy manner, and arrayed with such costly ornaments, that scarce any part of the original was to be seen or did appear, when looked thereon. Hence, it appeared a dress rather like a fop or coxcomb, than for one in his right wits.

Thus, through the gayness of their dress, and gallantry of their attire, the honest and well-disposed part of the clergy, began to throw off and lay aside this vain and pedantic dress, more suitable for comedians than for clergymen. One of which was the fore-said Mr. John Calvin, a plain honest man; but he not being willing to part with the coat, because of its old antiquity, and usefulness in its wear, there sat down and fell to work, first stripping off the fringes and next the lace. And having thus dismounted and stript it of all its pegeantry, vain show, and ornaments, wherewith it was so gorgeously arrayed, he carefully picked out the old threads; and like a wise œconomist, skilfully pieced and dressed it up a-new: so that, when stript of all its vain and unnecessary agrandisements, with which it was formerly decked, it may, with just propriety, receive the name of Calvin's coat, because of its being stript by him of all its ancient finery.

Hence, what an inexpressible blessing had it proved to all the protestant or reformed

churches, if Calvin had been so wise as not to have coveted, but to let them keep their coat, as well as the rest of all their florid pageantry; and put on no other dress or clothing than that plain vail or garment of his Master, wrought without seam, *viz.* the simplicity of the gospel taught by Jesus Christ. Then would she have appeared like herself, deckt with the robes of her ancient glory, the unsullied splendour of her native simplicity! But, to return to these two different constitutions, exprest in the foregoing, *viz.* the establishments of the Scotch and English; distinguished by the names of Presbytery and Episcopacy, *viz.* the Scotch Presbyterians and the English Episcopalians.

The Scotch presbyterians would admit of no other dress than that of Calvin's plain old brushed-up coat, and the English Episcopalians kept fast by their old half-mounted dress, laid over with embroidered lace; each party having their different dress or robes, *viz.* ceremonies, laid up in the vestry or records of their own church, *viz.* their established custom-house. The officers of each constitution were obliged to put on or wear no other dress than that which was laid up in the vestry of their own establishment. The Presbyterians in Scotland were necessitated to dress and appear in no other garb than that of Calvin's old plain coat. The Episcopalians in England were laid under the same obligation, to appear in no other dress than the old half-mounted coat, laid over with embroidered lace. The officers of

each custom-house or constitution being necessitated, by an obligation laid upon them at their entry, when initiated and received into that office, that if they shall be found at any time divested or not clothed in the same coat that belongs to the vestry of their own establishment, they shall not only be ejected, but stript of their office, and expelled their place. The unhappy distinction which fell in betwixt the officers of these two constitutions, was most unluckily occasioned by the difference of their dress, and has ever since proved the band of contention betwixt both. The Episcopal officers getting into high favour with government, by that authority soon came to disannul the laws of the Presbyterian custom-house or constitution, and thereby repealed and made void their rights; so that they could neither make entries, nor give out clearances, permits, or cockets. And ordained that the officers of both constitutions should become entirely subject to one custom-house or establishment, *viz.* Episcopacy; and that no entries shall be made, nor clearances, permits, or cockets, taken out from any other custom-house, under pain of law. Further, and that whosoever shall be so obstinate as not to make entries, and take out clearances, permits, and cockets, therefrom, shall be seized upon, and treated as rebels in both person, interest, and estate. And that no Presbyterian officer is to appear in his old plain coat, nor in any other dress, but in the old half-mounted coat, *viz.*

the livery of the above custom-house, under pain of being stript of his living, and expelled his place. And in case of contumacy, if he shall continue obstinate, he shall immediately be taken up, and sent unto the inquisition; whereon his goods shall be confiscated, and he himself tried for his life. The above was actually the case, and done without respect of persons.

The Presbyterian officers, so soon as they came to obtain their freedom, and recover their rights, made the same retaliation on the Episcopalian officers and their constituents: for they immediately ejected and expelled from their established constitution, all such as were drest in the half-mounted coat of the above custom-house, and were not clothed in Calvin's old plain dress. Thus these two different constitutions used each other by turns. At last the government, seeing how prejudicial and hurtful these two distinct custom-houses, or establishments and inquisitions, were to the state, and oppressive to the constitution of the public, *viz.* the lieges, therefore, taking both of these constitutions into consideration, and finding how much the public was harassed by the authority of these spiritual officers, to put a stop thereto, blew up both these inquisitions; by which they disarmed these officers, in divesting them of their absolute and despotic power over the people. Hence, and to proceed,

But the officers of both constitutions were thus far permitted to retain the use and power

of their different dresses, *viz.* the Scotch officers their old plain coat, and the English their old half-mounted coat or dress, to which they had been so long accustomed. The established constitution of each was as follows.

If any of these officers, in either of these two different constitutions, shall be found in any other dress than that of their own, *viz.* the Scotch in their old plain coat, and the English in their half-mounted dress, embroidered with lace, they shall, as has been observed, be stript of their living, and expelled their place. The officers in each of these established constitutions, were still permitted to make entries, give out clearances, cockets, and permits, but were entirely divested of making captures or seizures of one another. Part of the officers in the Scotch custom-house or constitution, began to infringe some of the articles or duties that had been added thereto, by which they became more moderate in some of said articles contained in their book of rates; but those who were more bigoted, rigid, and superstitious, began to exclaim against the rest. For which cause, they, on account of their rigid superstition, were ejected and sent about their business. But these officers, when turned out of their places, because of their ill nature and bigoted superstition, still exclaimed more and more; and still lament, with regret, the loss and power of their inquisition. So much for custom-houses, entries, clearances, cockets, permits, captures, and

seizures; plain half or whole trimmed coats, embroidered robes or drefs as in the above.

DISSERTATION VI.

Relating to a View of what is here called the City of Peace, with a distinct prospect of three large Garrisons; a great Forge, Furnace, or Vulcano, from whence they are served with all different kinds of Articles or Implements of War.

INTRODUCTION.

UNITY is the invincible strength or what may, with just propriety, be stiled the irresistible barrier of almost every particular society, whether state, nation, commonwealth, kingdom, or empire. This, I apprehend, is nothing more than what both history informs, and experience may teach us every day. For instance, consider but the state and constitution of south and north Britain, before these two nations became united. They were oft-times invaded by other nations; and even among themselves, broils and various feuds took place, which still added to their calamities. By which means, there was nothing but enmity prevailed, attended with a perpetual war, in bathing their swords in each others blood, and sheathing them in one others bowels. But, since they became united

in one body, they have not only resisted, but have even (though only an island) baffled some of the greatest powers in Europe. Nor has this been the fate of Britain alone—No: for almost every nation, whether commonwealth, kingdom or empire, has experienced the truth of this undeniable fact.

Hence, in unity there is strength, but division is the forerunner of desolation: for it seldom or never fails, but still carries along with it the inevitable ruin of that in which it takes place.

From hence, it is, therefore, now evident, of division being the heaviest calamity that ever befel a people; for it still completes its end. Witness the Jews (especially at the close of their state); it is reported, and not without reason, that the divisions which took place among that people, are what accomplished, and accelerated the ruin and utter destruction of their city, their temple, and nation, incomparably more, and even sooner, than the whole Roman armies were capable to effect.

Hence, all nations, have, in a more or less degree, experienced the fact of what is here expressed in the above, namely, that of division. And to this we may add that which is expressed by Jesus Christ, where he saith, If either a house, a family, or even a kingdom, or what not, be divided against itself, it cannot possibly stand, but must inevitably come to an end.

From hence, let every nation or society, kingdom or empire, take warning from the

certainly of the above, and be aware against division before it be too late. Further, I shall therefore proceed as follows.

Two ships were at sea within view of each other. One of the masters which had the command of said vessels being a Turk, and the other a Pagan; therefore, the less regard for one another. The weather being now somewhat easy, and as they lay becalmed waiting for a breeze, there was heard from the shore a report of many great guns or pieces of ordnance, thundering at a distance from off land. The noise of which great and terrible thunderings gave no small astonishment to each thereof. And though widely different in sentiment, they, on hearing of said noise, were thereby induced to hale, or rather call on one another; and being surprised, they both went a-shore together, where they found a Jew, and asked him the meaning of such loud and mighty thunderings. He told them it was the christians, who, though formerly united in one, are now divided into many different sects and parties, and thereby make war against each other. And being desirous to know the state thereof, they asked the Jew at what distance these different encampments of the christians might be within land. He, in reply, told them, it was no great way off. On which they all three agreed, and set out on an intended journey in view thereof together. And marching slowly for some time, at last discovered the agreeable prospect of a most beautiful country. Mean time, in spying the diffe-

rent prospects thereof, at a small distance was the appearance of a most beautiful city, situated on a rising ground, entirely secure, as if fortified by nature. Further, and on the right hand of which, towards the south, was the appearance of a city as it were covered with clouds of smoke. And also, on the left hand, towards the north thereof, stood, on a rising ground, a certain city or large garrison fortified by art. Towards the north of which, at a certain distance, stood another garrison, much of a piece and almost the same with the other. And also, towards the north of the two former garrisons stood a third, at some distance from the rest, but not so large in appearance. Above these three garrisons stood different degrees of smoke. The first garrison was become altogether darkened, by reason of the sulphur which was perpetually ascending therefrom, by which it was overshadowed. And over the second stood pillars of smoke; which did not only cover, but darkened the sky. And as to the third, the smoke thereon was but small, scarce discernable to the eye of the most attentive beholder. From thence we went forward, until we came to that fair and beautiful city we had seen at a distance; and coming to one of the gates of said city, we there met with the centinels, who gave us free admittance, and told us, that upon our compliance with the laws of said city, we should have free liberty to become her citizens. And entering thereinto, they shewed us all their different laws and liberties, which her citizens

enjoyed. And as we came to pass through the different streets and lanes of this city, standards were placed at all the most conspicuous posts, with ensigns and colours flying: the inscriptions on which were unity, peace, harmony, and love. From thence we went to the ramparts upon the walls of the city, where ensigns were placed at a certain distance one from another, with colours flying with the above inscriptions, *viz.* unity, peace, harmony, and love. And from these ramparts on the wall of the city, they shewed us all the different appearances, and the meaning thereof, which we had spied at a distance, before we came nigh unto the city; and thus we had them displayed as follows.

The garrison you there spy on the left hand towards the north, is Luther's. The next or mid fort which stands up towards the old black garrison, and consists of so many little or small garrisons encamped around the great fort, is that of Calvin's, built upon one Augustin, to whom it adheres for its foundation. And the old large black garrison, which stands to the south of the mid garrison (*viz.* Calvin's, who himself was an Augustin monk), is the Pope's or church of Rome. And that old black city, covered with clouds of smoke, which stands a good way off to the south of all the rest, is the great Vulcano where all the different pieces of artillery and instruments of war are manufactured, for the supply of the above garrisons. From which city or Vulcano is extended that great toll-road, made at

no less than sixty feet in breadth (on which you see so much repair of carriages and travellers), and which leads forth to the different garrisons. Twenty-four feet in the middle of which great road, are appointed and strongly paved for waggon and other great carriages, laden with different pieces of heavy artillery, *viz.* cannons, balls, mortars, and bomb-shells; zebecks, grenadoes, squibs, and cohorns, with all other different kinds of artillery and instruments of war, ready to be sold out to the different garrisons, according as they shall require in their demands. Twelve feet of the twenty-four feet, express in the above, are allotted for waggon and other carriages bound for these garrisons or seats of war. The other twelve feet are appointed for empty waggon, in their return to the Vulcano. Twelve feet on each side of the twenty-four feet, are allotted for other machines, for the conveniency of passengers, in their going and coming betwixt the great Vulcano and said garrisons. Twelve feet appointed on the one side for going, and twelve on the other for the return of these machines with traders who deal in buying and in selling of these different kinds of merchandise, *viz.* all different kinds of artillery, even from that of a cannon, a mortar, or bomb-shell, down to a cohorn, with all other kinds of articles or implements of war.

Further, on the outside of these last twelve feet, next to the brink of the great road, six

feet are appointed, on each side, for pedlers and other travellers; six for going and six for returning to their appointed stations, whether at the Vulcano or the above garrisons.

Having therefore laid before us a plan and extent of the great road, the whole being sixty feet in breadth, twenty-four for great carriages, twelve on each side for coaches and other chariots, and six feet on each side for pedlers and the like, who deal as in the above, they next laid before us a description of the great Vulcano and furnace, with that of the great forge, where all the different kinds of artillery, used in the above garrisons, are manufactured, *viz.* cannons, great guns, mortars, bomb-shells, grenadoes, squibs, and co-horns, with all other sorts of instruments of war. Next to this, they shewed us a great many recruiting parties, with sergeants and drums, always coming and going between these different garrisons and this city, which is called the city of Peace. And as these sergeants and drums were still going and coming, and beating up for recruits, they beat up not only under the wall, but approached even to the very gates of the city: so that, all such as would not adhere to the aforesaid inscription, which is unity, peace, harmony, and love, took the freedom to desert and enlist for soldiers into the standing regiments of any of these three garrisons, which appeared most suitable to their own taste. By which means, this city was kept in perfect peace, on account of such as were dissatisfied, having it in their

power to desert therefrom at pleasure, and enlist with whomsoever they will. Of which we were told by the inhabitants, that all of these three different forts, with all their encampments, were altogether made up of deserters, and the descendants of deserters, from this city. They further told us, that each of these three different garrisons and camps of deserters, pretend to have their rights from this our city; but the pretension thereof is altogether false: for they are nothing more than mere extracts of their own drawing; and are neither signed by the governor of our city, nor by his authority, or constituents appointed by him for negotiating his affairs: for the rights and seals of our city are infallibility; but the rights and seals of their garrisons are nothing more than what they call orthodoxy; or rather, what, in other words, may be stiled, The ancient parent or mother of Popery.

From this we proceeded in our discourse, and asked of what standing these different garrisons were, and how long they had continued since their first founding or foundations thereof took place. They, in reply, told us, that that old black garrison that stands up towards the south of the former two, is of one thousand four hundred and fifty years standing or upwards. And that the second, or middle garrison, and that little fort that stands up towards the north, are not much above two hundred and forty years standing. The old black garrison that stands up towards the south,

which was founded in the year 325, not by a few individuals, but even by the main body, and principal officers of this city, who all deserted and went off at once. And as to the other two garrisons, which stand up towards the north, they again were founded by two different bodies of deserters, which went off from that old black garrison, which stands up towards the south of the other two; and from whom alone they have taken out their rights, only, with some small corrections, and a few articles, which they pretend to have extracted from our's in way of amendment of the rights and charter of the old garrison that stands on the right hand of the former, up towards the south thereof, which at last, tho' falsely, did claim infallibility for the seals of her charter. The other two garrisons claimed no other seal than that of orthodoxy, which was the first seal of the old black garrison, which, by her antiquity, now claims infallibility. But the rights of these two subordinate garrisons were neither signed by the governor of our city, nor given out by his authority, nor by the authority of the old garrison, but only, as in the manner in which they have been described in the above.

And as we were proposing to go and take a view of these three different garrisons, they were so good as to acquaint us, that we ought to be very careful in what manner we behaved ourselves towards them of whom they were made up, especially those in that old black garrison which stands on the right hand, up

towards the south of the former two; lest they should come to press and oblige us to enlist into their garrison. And if you should refuse to enlist thereinto, they will by no means regard to put you to death. Further, and you must likewise be aware against falling in with any of these recruiting parties that belong to the old garrison, lest they should come to ensnare and thereby entangle you. The mark you are to know and distinguish them by from those of the other two garrisons, is this, they are all clothed in black. And when we were just going to take our leave of, and had thanked them for the friendly advice and good usage we had received since we came thither, they, in reply, told us, we had got no other usage than what belonged to their city. And, if we were pleased, after having taken a view of these different garrisons, to return and be subject to the laws of their city, we should be admitted as free subjects, burgessees, and inhabitants, or citizens of the same.

And from hence we took our leave, and set out on our journey to view each of said garrisons. And as we went from thence, in passing along, we arrived at the suburbs of the old black city, which stands up towards the south; where, meeting with two persons of more than common dress, and entering into conversation, we asked them what was the name of their city, and the nature of their manufactures. They, in reply, told us, that its name was Pandemonium, or the great Vulcano, wherein were manufactured all different kinds of im-

plements or instruments of war. We next came to ask them of the antiquity and date of their city, and time of its standing. They, in reply, told us it was founded in the year three hundred and twenty-five, which is above one thousand four hundred and forty years ago; the same year in which that old black garrison that stands next to us up towards the north, upon whose account this great Vulcano was set up, to serve them in all manner of different pieces of artillery, even from the first piece of ordnance, down to a musket, with all other kinds of implements or instruments of war. And as we were conversing together, they asked us from whence we came. We, in reply, told them, that we last came from the city of Peace. On hearing of which, they told us that the city of Peace was a city with which they had little or no connection; and that they would not give one week of the old black garrison, for ten thousand years of that city; for it was a city which was never calculated for their interest. On this we asked them in what kind of articles the old garrison dealt. They, in return, frankly told us, that they dealt in all different kinds of artillery, even from the largest piece of ordnance down to a musket, *viz.* in cannons, mortars, and other pieces of artillery of different sorts and sizes; likewise, in both bullets and bomb-shells of different sizes, to answer all the various pieces of ordnance and kinds of artillery, even from the greatest down to the least; such as grenadoes, squibs, and cohorns

of different sizes, with every other kind of instruments of war; in which we have been employed in furnishing, and with which they have been served from this Vulcano, even from the very first erection unto this present. We further asked them concerning the other two garrisons, in what kind of articles they dealt, and were served with. They, answering, told us, as for that little garrison that stands farthest off up towards the north, it is just such a one as has never been much to our interest: for such artillery as they require are only of the smallest sizes, *viz.* such as grenadoes, squibs, and cohorns: and the reason is, they are only upon the defensive, and not upon the offensive. But as for that large garrison in the middle, with so many small forts or little garrisons around, it is just such a one, that, since it was founded, has in a great measure carried off the trade from the old garrison. For this garrison has been so often divided and subdivided, that it is now (though amongst themselves) become the seat of a perpetual war, by their destroying and devouring up one another: for their wars are scarce ever carried abroad, but are still reserved and kept up amongst themselves, namely against those of their own territories. And since this garrison (or rather garrisons) has been founded and set up, there has been double, if not triple, the quantity of metal in artillery and ammunition consumed by it, or rather them, namely these forts, than both the other two garrisons beside. For we have reason to know by, or rather from, the

company's books, that there is double, if not triple, the artillery used in the different pieces of ordnance, *viz.* in cannons, mortars, great guns, grenadoes, squibs and cohorns, bombs and bomb-shells, with all other different kinds of artillery, than both the other two garrisons, *viz.* the old black fortrefs, and the little garrison that stands up towards the north. For I remember, that in the year 17—8, there was as large artillery used by some of these little or small garrisons, which belong to the great middle fortrefs, than was used by the great old black garrison itself, and that both in bombs and bomb-shells; some of which were like three feet in diameter; the greater of which never went from this Vulcano. The demands were so great of these large bomb-shells, or pieces of heavy artillery, that they were carried away almost red hot from the mouth of the very furnaces, which was enough to have kindled and set on fire, and to have burned up, the very carriages on which they were laid, for transporting them to their appointed garrisons. But if we were not circumscribed by the great superintendent of this Vulcano, to a certain weight and thickness in these bomb-shells, according to their different diameters, we could scarce find metal sufficient to serve them with. And if it were not upon account of the artillery used, and ammunition consumed, by these little small garrisons that sit around the great middle fortrefs, this work would be in peril of being given up.

On this we took our leave of these two persons, and proceeded on our way, on purpose to view these three different garrisons. And thus we went by the way of the great road, upon one of the foot paths, that leads from the great Vulcano, towards the three garrisons. As we passed on our journey, we came up first towards the old black garrison. And, as we drew nigh thereto, we beheld a very large and stately monument, upon which were engraven the names of all its different founders, and such as had added to its garrisons. But calling to mind the advice we received, when we came to take our leave of the city of Peace, we made no great stay here, for fear of danger. But passing on our journey, we next came to the great middle garrison, which, in proper speaking, was rather a fortress or city of garrisons. Here we did not apprehend so much danger, if it had not been from what we were liable to from the different engines of war; so we went forward to view this large fortress, with these small or lesser garrisons with which it was surrounded. The founders of which garrison or garrisons, namely such as had added batteries thereunto, were held in as much esteem by or among the soldiers of this or rather these garrisons, as if it had been the legislator himself. And as we were taking a view of these different buildings and operations of the place, we there beheld, though not without astonishment, how eager their different operators were employed in the vari-

ous branches on which the security of their garrisons depended; especially those who have the oversight, direction, and management of affairs in conducting the war, adding strength to her forts, and defending her bulwarks. And thus they proceeded with action, in whatever profession or station in which they were appointed. The stout and robust masons (or rather professors) were employed in the founding of garrisons, the building of batteries, the raising of bastions, and the erecting of magazines; but the old and superannuated, whose strength was exhausted and worn out by hard and oppressive labour, are generally employed in the repairing, and in keeping in repair, the different bastions and batteries belonging to said garrisons, which are commonly not only shattered, but much damaged, by the returns of the weighty metal from the enemy's heavy artillery. The business of such commonly consists in going about the different fortifications, bastions, and batteries, with small pieces of stone and bitumen, with an instrument to work up the small or little chinks, with whatever breaches were occasioned by the storm of the enemy's heavy artillery. But this business is commonly attended with great jeopardy, and oft-times proves of the utmost danger to such as are employed therein: for they are generally exposed, in the midst of their employment, not only to sharp showers, but commonly meet with the discharge of a heavy fire from the artillery placed on the enemy's batteries.

From hence it follows, that from the confusion of this place, in a word, there was nothing else to be seen in the different employments of this fortress (or rather these fortifications), but garrisons founding, batteries raising, magazines building, bastions repairing, cannons firing, bombs bursting, balls flying, and shells breaking. And nothing was to be heard therein but noise and tumult, cannons roaring, great buildings falling to pieces by the storm of the enemy; to these we may add the rattling of the artillery, and clattering of shells, with every other disagreeable aspect or scene of horror. And as for the smaller pieces of ordnance and engines of war, such as grenades, squibs, and cohorns, though used by these different garrisons against one another, they were not very prejudicial or hurtful, but only in annoying the different inhabitants of these garrisons, which were so much divided against in molesting one another. In short, by the sulphur, the smoke, and noise of this place, it for certain was no comfortable place of residence or habitation; which, as expressed in the above, soon put us upon a resolution of going to view the other garrison. And thus we set forward; but no sooner returning again into the great road, but we distinguished the difference of the publicness of these garrisons: for the road was formerly thronged or crowded with merchants and all other kinds of travellers, and carriages still going and coming betwixt the late fortress of garrisons (which

we had just now left), and the Vulcano or great forge. But as we went forth and passed along the great road towards the little garrison, there were few or no traces worth our taking notice of; but as we came up thereto, and were viewing its buildings, we saw nothing here worth observation or taking notice of, for there was little or no artillery used in this place, if it had not been not in the offensive, but in defence thereof. The most of the artillery used in this place, was only such as grenades, squibs, and cohorns, for keeping clear and driving off the different swarms of locusts, that came from off the different garrisons, to annoy, trouble, or molest the inhabitants of said garrison.

Having, therefore, taken a cursory view of all these different fortifications and garrisons, as in the above, and having satisfied our curiosity according to the information we had received, we there resolved to return again to the city of Peace; which is certainly not only above every other, but even the best of all cities.

1. What is here exprest in the foregoing, by the city of Peace, is meant a republication of the law and religion of nature, or gospel taught by Jesus Christ.

2. What is called forts or garrisons, with their bastions, is meant their systems of divinity, *viz.* their confessions, or rather what we may call their confusions of faith.

3. And by what is here stiled batteries, is

meant the supports of defence made in favours of these confessions or systems of divinity.

4. Those who are exprest under the name of recruiting sergeants, are the systematical clergy, that still go about preaching and beating up for recruits, namely to persuade men to enlist and comply with their systems and systematical doctrines and notions of divinity, which they so much applaud and cry up.

5. By what is here called the great forge or Vulcano, is meant the city of Pandemonium, viz. the devil's founding-house, or great forge, wherein is manufactured all different kinds of engines of persecution.

6. What is here stiled the old black garrison is the church of Rome.

7. The large mid garrison or fortress, about which stand so many different small garrisons, is that of Calvin's, an Augustin friar, whose system is now divided as in the above.

8. The little small garrison which stands up towards the north, and which useth little or no artillery, viz. ensigns of persecution, is that of Luther's.

9. The robust masons, who found and build the garrisons, the batteries, bastions, and magazines, are the different kinds of systematical clergy, who compile and make up all these different confessions (or rather confusions) of faith, or systems of divinity, that abound so much in the christian world.

10. The monument exprest in the old black garrison, whereon are engraven an account

of the various founders of said garrison, is the canonical records of the church of Rome, wherein all the names of their different saints and fathers of that church are canonized.

11. The old masons that were superannuated and worn out, and who are only employed in repairing of the different bastions and batteries, are those old systematical clergy, who, through age and dotage, are not fit for making or composing of new systems or confessions of faith; but are still supporting and defending the old, by pinning up the chinks, cracks, and racks, occasioned therein by the attacks made thereon by the opposite parties.

12. Those that were held in so much esteem in the mid garrison by the soldiers, on account of their having founded and built all these different garrisons, batteries, bastions, and magazines, are the different clergy, who have compiled all these various systems of divinity, or confessions of faith.

13. The large artillery and bomb-shells that were used in the year 17—8 by one of the little mid garrisons, which were divided, means the A—t—b—r—in North Britain, in throwing their bulls or anathemas in excommunicating their brethren, who, though formerly one, became two distinct garrisons.

14. The small pieces of artillery used among these different garrisons, *viz.* grenadoes, squibs, and cohorns, mean the sad reflections and exclamations, which these different kinds of sys-

tematical teachers and professors thereof throw against one another.

15. The deserters that fled from the city of Peace are those christians, who left the simplicity of the gospel of Christ, and cleaved fast to the doctrines, traditions, and commandments of men, as contained in these different systems or confessions (or rather confusions) of faith, whether of Popish or Protestant construction.

16. The deserters who fled from the old black garrison, are those who fled from Popery and became Protestants.

17. The swarms of locusts that came off from these different garrisons to plague and torment the inhabitants, are these different kinds of parties belonging to the various systems or confessions which they hold, and thereby plague and abuse one another.

DISSERTATION VII.

Of Christ's Kingdom being Divided and Subdivided by those who pretend to be his nearest and best Friends.

IT has been alledged by some, that creeds and confessions, viz. systems or tests of faith, are the only security we can possibly have against Popery; but, to prove the mistake of what is here advanced, the sum of Popery is the gospel misconstrued therein by ignorant,

self-interested, and designing men. Similar thereto, creeds and confessions, in which you confide, are the very strength and band of Popery: for it is on them and them alone, on which Popery depends. For without which, namely creeds and confessions, Popery could not properly exist; therefore, remove the cause, *viz.* creeds and confessions, and the effect will cease in course. But further,

As to the above, it is a well known maxim, and an established principle with Papists, not to keep faith with heretics. *viz.* Protestants. Conformable to which principle, it is therefore an easy matter for a Papist to come under obligations without number to a Protestant, when he can, with a full freedom of conscience, break them at pleasure. But if you can possibly convince a Papist to believe in the gospel of Christ alone, independent of systems, creeds, and confessions (or tests) of faith, which in a word, are nothing more than the mere constructions of fallible, and oft-times ignorant, self-interested, and designing men, then, but not till then, they are no more Papists. And further,

It has been strongly pled, that if a number of christians shall join together in one society, they may choose and settle upon whatever system of divinity they please, according to what they themselves think proper. And therefore, if the legislature shall be pleased to countenance and appoint for each teacher of said system a certain revenue, they are bound by their engagements to teach no other doc-

trine than what is contained in said system. And if they shall preach any other doctrine than that for which they agreed, they are culpable, and ought, upon examination thereon, to be expelled their place.

In consideration of what is here exprest, the first thing to be enquired into is this. Let these persons who propagate and patronize the foresaid, make it appear from the New Testament, if they have any other authority for making systems of divinity or tests of faith, for binding people thereunto, but only unto the simplicity of the gospel of Christ. Hence, I am fully certain their authority is not from the New Testament, nor from any portion of said book—No. Now, if one sect of christians take upon them the making of systems, tests, or articles of faith, Why not a second? and if a second, Why not a third? and if a third, Why not a fourth? and so on. For the gloss put upon a number of texts by one sect, may be very different, if not quite opposite, to the glosses put thereon by a second. And the gloss put thereon by a third sect may differ widely, in a certain number of texts, from that on which a second sect agreed, and so on to a fourth; and yet none of all these four sects can claim a better right or authority, for any of which glosses put on said texts, than another; for they are all equal and alike, only the comments and opinions of fallible and self interested men; and perhaps, in every respect, as fallible heads.

Now as concerning societies agreeing upon

a certain number of articles to bind them together, I do acknowledge, in things civil it may hold, but as to things sacred, with respect to different sects of christians making articles or tests of faith, *viz.* systems of divinity, it will by no means hold—No: for the gospel of Christ can never possibly admit of being divided and torn to pieces. For instance, if a person should be at the expence of making a testament upon which his last will depends, and a certain number of associates should take hold thereof, and divide and tear it to pieces after the testator was dead, it would be altogether useless; and to what purpose would it answer, but only to make null and void the last deed of the owner for their own particular benefit: the latter is entirely similar to the former; for those who have divided the gospel system, by tearing it into so many different pieces by their systems of divinity, are just, in every respect, as guilty as them who divided and tore in pieces the above. But to proceed,

Could not those who pretend to be Christ's best friends, who have divided and torn in pieces his last will and testament, shew but as much civility to his religion, as the Roman soldiers, by whom he was crucified, did for his vesture or seamless coat, who said, "Let us not rent it, but cast lots for it, and see whose it shall be?" A very odd account indeed! that the very soldiers, who were not only instrumental, but even active, in crucifying of Christ, shewed more respect for his vesture or seamless coat, than those who pretend to be his nearest and best

friends did for his last will and testament: for they have not only divided but even subdivided, and torn it into so many different pieces as it now is.

Further, as concerning the reflections thrown out against some of the clergy or ministers of the church (by those systematical clergy, and laymen their constituents, whom they call orthodox), for not preaching up these systematical doctrines, which they are bound to when admitted members or teachers of that church, the next or first thing to be enquired into is this, namely, if those clergy be bound at their admission to preach nothing but what is contained in the adopted system, *viz.* the doctrines, traditions, and commandments of men, independent of the gospel of Christ. If this be the case, I fairly agree with these gentlemen. But I am very doubtful it is not the case; for I have been an eye and ear-witness, when some of the most superstitious and bigoted sects have been admitting their clergy into that office, and they did not bind them to the doctrines and traditions of men alone—No; but even more unto the gospel of Christ; and the traditions of men were only brought thereinto in way of addition.

From hence, it is, therefore, now evident, that the rewards given and received by such clergy, for preaching up the doctrines and traditions of men, are only of a temporary nature; but the rewards received for teaching the simplicity of the gospel of Christ, are more

permanent; for they are the rewards of everlasting life. But further,

Is it not exprest by Christ, that a man cannot serve two masters; but he will love the one, and despise the other? Now Christ is certainly one of the best of masters; and the reward promised for teaching the simplicity of the gospel, is life everlasting; but the rewards for teaching the doctrines and traditions of men, are but small, short, and of a perishing nature. Therefore no minister of the New Testament, who teaches the simplicity of the gospel, is to be wondered at, though he loves and cleaves fast to the one master and despises the other: for whether it be right to obey God or man, judge ye.

Hence, it is yet further insisted on by those systematical teachers and their constituents, that when ministers are paid for teaching of these systematical doctrines, *viz.* the traditions and commandments of men, Why do they not teach them? But, in answer to this objection, by the same law the chief priests and pharisees, who sent officers to apprehend Christ, accused them for not bringing him; for they all, no doubt, were paid for that office. Hence, Were they culpable for not bringing him? No, certainly they were not: for they say that "Never man spake like this man." From hence it follows, neither are those men culpable for teaching the New Testament system (independent of the traditions of men): for it was sealed with Christ's blood, and the other

only with that of orthodoxy. Hence, and to proceed,

Though the soldiers that nailed Christ to the cross and crucified him, were paid for it, Did their being paid for crucifying of Christ make it a duty? No, certainly not. They were likewise paid for dividing or renting of Christ's seamless coat: for every soldier had a share for his reward. Did they rent it? No, they did not: for the Roman soldiers, though only Pagans, that it might be kept whole and entire, said, "Let us not rent nor divide it, but let us cast lots for it, and see whose it shall be." But did those who pretend to be Christ's nearest and best friends use him so, when they have divided and torn his last Will and Testament into more pieces than the Roman soldiers would have done his seamless coat? No, they did not. Might not these gentlemen, who pretend to be Christ's nearest and best friends, have given him the same chance in his religion, *viz.* the gospel system, that the Roman soldiers gave him in his coat or vesture? Could they not have cast lots for it, and thereby seen to whose share it would have fallen, rather than to have divided and torn it assunder into so many different pieces as it now is? But they had no occasion either for casting lots or dividing his last Will or Testament—No: for it was a coat or vesture not only sufficient, but large enough, for covering the whole human race, yea, the whole rational creation not excepted.

Further, Judas was also paid by the chief

priests for to betray his Master. Hence, because Judas was paid as in the above, Did his being paid for such an unjust action qualify his guilt, and make his fulfilling such an unlawful bargain a duty in betraying him? No, certainly not. To this, I apprehend, you will certainly agree. And the reason why you agree is this; because that Judas was hired by the chief priests to commit an unlawful action. But, in answer to your objection, all such as are willing to give hire or pay reward to persons for tearing assunder Christ's last Will and Testament, are nearly, if not equally, guilty with the chief priests and Pharisees: for the one is entirely similar and near a-kin to the other. For the chief priests, the Scribes, and Pharisees, when they saw Christ, said among themselves, "This is the heir, come, let us kill him, that we may seize on his inheritance."

Hence, similar thereto are all such who are willing to give hire in paying a reward for tearing in pieces Christ's last Will and Testament; they are just the same as Simeon and Levi, brothers in iniquity. And they who receive the hire who divide and preach up systems of divinity, *viz.* the doctrines and traditions of men, independent of the gospel, are equal to Judas, and therefore, fellow servants together. Hence, and to proceed,

The Roman soldiers were likewise paid by the chief priests and council to conceal Christ's resurrection; therefore, Did their being paid for to conceal it, make it a duty not to disco-

ver it? No, it did not. And cowards they were; for they might have received the money as an evidence of the arch villany of these consecrated gentlemen, and after have published abroad the fact; which would not only have left it without doubt, but have proved it to a demonstration, by exposing the intended deceit of these vagabonds; and thereby have made it more evident to the world, than the money had never been given by these deceivers for concealing it. For the foldiers had no cause to be afraid of the chief priests, whose power could never possibly have reached them, who were the servants not of the Jews, but of the Roman government.

Hence, it is therefore, in every respect, as great a duty for ministers to preach the gospel of Christ independent of the traditions of men, and embargoes laid on the gospel against being taught independent thereof, as it was for the Roman foldiers to have declared and published abroad Christ's resurrection: for the power of the chief priests, and of these systematical clergy and their constituents, is much of a piece; and they are cowards that will not preach the gospel, independent of the traditions ingrafted thereon, by ignorant, self-interested, and designing men.

Further, I cannot properly conclude, without making the following remark, how that both clergy and laymen, whether of Popish or Protestant systems, are all not only born with the priests chains or wreathes about their necks, but are likewise bred up from their in-

fant state to believe as truth, yea, though grossly false, whatever is contained therein. And if a person should receive orders in this belief, and if time, knowledge, and experience, shall convince him of the invalidity of his system, and if he should preach up the gospel to his hearers independent of said system, Is he thereby culpable? No, certainly not. I know it is objected by the systematical teachers and their constituents, that, if convinced of the absurdity of his system, why does he not depart from it, and cleave to that which he thinks right? But, in answer to said objection, if he be convinced of the absurdity of his system, and traditions therein contained, Would he not (from conscience) wish to convince his hearers of the absurdity thereof? If not, this would be a bad account of his belief, when he only wished to be saved himself independent of those committed to his charge. But, if he shall continue in his office, and preach the gospel to such, independent of their system or systematical traditions, he may thereby save his hearers as well as himself; but, if he was to depart from his charge, they, without an opportunity of knowledge, behoved both to live and die in darkness.

Hence, if a person, whether a Papist or a Protestant, shall be convinced of his error, *viz.* the absurdity of his system, and shall preach up the gospel of Christ independent thereof, he, by continuing with his hearers, may thereby convince them also; but, if he shall demit and give place to another, he de-

prives them of that opportunity they possess through him. From this, I would have no person to depart from his charge, except he be expelled therefrom by the enemies of truth. Further, and to proceed,

Men, from an opportunity of knowledge, may chance to be convinced of their mistake; but, without which, they never possibly can. For instance, if a Popish priest should become Protestant, would not he, if not expelled his place, do more good by remaining in his Popish charge to deliver his hearers from darkness, than by his departing (to preach the gospel to Protestants already delivered); and thereby deprive them of the knowledge gained by him, which they could never again possess? As with the one, so does it also fare with the other, *viz.* Protestants, in their being delivered from darkness unto the knowledge of Christ.

From hence it follows, the religion taught by Jesus Christ, when purged of the corruptions ingrafted thereon by ignorant, self-interested, and designing men, is certainly by far, when properly understood, the most simple and glorious system of religion under heaven; and yet, after all, there is no religion in the world has been less understood, worse treated, and wofully abused, than the gospel of Christ, especially by those who pretend to be the only true christians in the world. But, whatever they may pretend to, one thing is evident, if they had understood the gospel, they had never possibly been divided in their opinions of

it: for it is only a want of knowledge in the fundamental or essential part of Christ's religion, *viz.* the gospel, which is the principal or chief cause of all their divisions. In pursuing of this subject, one thing further I cannot but observe, and is as follows.

The systematical doctors, namely, those who propagate, patronize, and are advocates for systematical divinity, are so intent thereon, that they would rather (mark this) that all (according to their procedure) in both heaven and earth should be sacrificed (yea, the attributes of God not excepted), than admit of their favourite system, however gross or absurd, being wrong, or that an error should be found therein. And it is only for their system, though ever so absurd, they contend, and not for truth: for their system is their God (witness Roman Catholics), and by that they will stand, though, if we may so speak, it should be for the devil. And thus have the enemies of Christ, under a pretended zeal for the glory of God, divided his kingdom, contrary to the established laws therein delivered by himself; and yet, after all, he is willing to forgive, "And I gave her space to repent of her fornications, and she repented not." But to this I shall add as follows.

"I say unto you repent; for the time is at hand." Now, therefore, I say unto you repent, lest another step in before you, and thereby leave you to perish in the wreck of your own system, which will certainly overwhelm you, without a speedy deliverance as

in the above. From hence, I shall therefore just barely observe as follows.

Nothing is more certain than this, *viz.* that systems and systematical doctrines, the devices of fallible, self-interested, and designing men, are certainly, of all others, the most effectual and deep laid schemes for dividing of Christ's kingdom, and defacing of christianity. For instance, In what light would the worshippers of the great goddess Diana have appeared in the Heathen or Pagan world, *viz.* of five or six temples, and as many altars, having been erected at Ephesus in remembrance of the great goddess, the image that is said to have fallen down from Jupiter; and yet, though all built and set up in remembrance of Diana, those her greatest devotees would not so much as partake of one anothers sacrifices, that were offered on the different altars at said temples to the great goddess alone, *viz.* that fictitious deity whom all the world is said to have worshipped? And also, if as many temples of virtue should have been erected and set up at Rome, and though all built and dedicated to one and the same fictitious deity, none of the Romans, her devotees, would so much as partake or yet worship the said fictitious deity together in one anothers temples? Hence, however strange this may appear, how much more strange and unbecoming is it for christians of various denominations, who will not so much as either hear, or yet partake, with one another at their different ordinances in worshipping of the one true God?

Further, Balaam, as reported, in obedience to Balak, that he might curse Israel, ordered Balak to build him seven different altars distinct from one another; but, mark this, they were to seven different deities, representing the seven different planets, an altar to each different god.

Now, from this it is evident, that Balaam did not cause Balak to erect two or more altars to one god, like those who have the presumption to call themselves christians, and worshippers of the true God; though, I apprehend, they have established and set up a hundred, if not more, different altars or modes of worship to the true God, whom they, tho' ignorantly, all pretend to serve; yet, after all, there will scarce two of said number, if it be not with reluctance, worship at one anothers altars. From this variety of altars, one would, therefore, almost suppose themselves to be living in Balaam's country. But, I would to God they were but as wise as Balaam, in erecting but one altar to each God; but in this they are not.

From hence, one would therefore be induced to believe, that the christians, according to the number of modes of adoration, or altars at which they worship distinct from one another, served a plurality of gods, *viz.* every various sect or party, a god different from another. Hence, and yet all pretending to serve not a strange, but the alone true and living God.

The above divisions proceed from a misun-

derstanding the gospel, with the different corruptions ingrafted thereon by ignorant, self-interested, and designing men. But further,

What follows deserves our particular notice. Though the christians have so wofully corrupted and divided their religion, we never hear of Balaam having divided the religion of either of these different gods or deities, whom he pretended to serve—No. Hence, nor did we ever hear of Balaam having set up two distinct altars one against another, to either of these gods to whom he, in compliance to Balak's request, is said to have offered sacrifice—No.

Lastly, I shall therefore conclude with the following remark. Since the christians (mark this) have assumed God's authority in dividing the Godhead, God, in his just displeasure, has therefore, as a mark of his just indignation, and as a just judgment for so doing, not only left, but given them up to such a degree, as to set up altar against altar, as a lasting monument of their folly to the world; namely, in their being not only divided, but even subdivided one against another, in their worship of him. These evidences, I apprehend, are of such a palpable nature, as cannot possibly be denied. The above is so evidently to be discerned, that no person in his right wits, except fallen a sacrifice to his own prejudice, can possibly escape perceiving the truth of what is here exprest.

Hence it is, therefore, evident from the above, how that, by what they call systems of divinity, they have not only perplexed, but

reduced the christian religion into a mere intelligible jargon, full of contradictions, altogether unlike its divine master. But it is not from a regard to truth from whence people act in matters of religion—No; but merely from respect to whatever opinions they have been accustomed through the prejudice of education.

DISSERTATION VIII.

Of such as Despise Government.

HAVING proceeded thus far in my pursuit, as to conclude the systematical abuses which are ingrafted on the gospel, by ignorant and designing men, I shall therefore just barely observe and point out some of the bad effects and consequences which have accrued from said abuses.

The first of which is a blind and misguided zeal in each sect, through a systematical belief not only of salvation being circumscribed to their system alone, but even contending unto blood in support thereof: so that, when the civil magistrate comes to interpose in rectifying of such wild disorders (which were oft-times brought on by his taking part with one side and against the other), such as were persecuted for not complying with what was required of them in the religion (or rather superstition) of the country, when apprehended for their rebelling against government in not

conforming with what was required, having their lives offered to them upon condition of their bidding God save the king, chused rather to die and throw away their lives, than comply with that divine precept taught and laid before us in the gospel by Jesus Christ, who positively requires of us to "Love our enemies; and to bless them that curse us; and to do good to them that hate us; and to pray for them who despitefully use and persecute us." Further, and instead of our rebelling, Christ tells us, that (in order to prevent our giving offence) "When they persecute us in one city, we are to fly to another." Now, they who refuse and will not pray for their enemies, namely, such as despitefully use and persecute them, but wilfully throw away their lives, as in the above, contrary to what Jesus Christ requires of us, can, therefore, by no means die christians—No; because they not only thereby reject, but despise as vain, that which Christ requires in the gospel. Hence, to such I shall therefore add as follows.

I would ask those who despise government, and will not be subject thereto, except conformable to their own making, From whence they have and derive their authority? I am sure it is not from the gospel of Christ—No; nor from his apostles: for the New Testament knows of no such doctrine: for Christ and his apostles inculcate the quite contrary doctrine, on every one that believes and adheres thereto. Hence, and if not from Christ nor his apostles, it must, therefore, be Antichristian;

and if Antichristian, they are not Christians; but only, by their claiming of that name, the same as they who put on a mask of piety and devotion, in order to hypocrise and couch their deceit. But, to proceed,

That the rejecting of government is not an institution of the gospel, but of an Antichristian appointment, see Rom. xiii. 1,—8. with others to whom they refer. “ Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive unto themselves damnation.” [See also Titus iii. 1. “ Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.” And also, 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14, 15. “ Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well-doing, ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.” “ For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for

“ he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For, for this cause pay you tribute also; for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render, therefore, to all their dues: tribute, to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom; fear, to whom fear; honour, to whom honour. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.” See also Matth. xxii. 21. latter clause, “ Render, therefore, unto Cæsar, the things which are Cæsar’s; and to God, the things that are God’s.”

From hence, we have here in the first verse, a most noble and pathetic advice laid before us by the apostle Paul, in that he requires of us to be subject to governors. And in the latter clause of which, in order that we may submit thereto, he assures us, that “ there is no power but of God:” for he tells us expressly, they are all appointed and ordained of him. And in verse second, he there assures us, that “ whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they also that resist” the power, “ shall receive unto themselves damnation,” that is, punishment for so doing. And further, we are likewise assured of the same from Titus, who puts us in mind to “ be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, and to be ready to every good work.” And

also, we are taught by Peter to "submit ourselves to every ordinance of man," not as a matter of indifference, but "for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well." And we are told further, that "it is the will of God, that with well-doing, we may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." And to return,

We are told that "rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil, Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same."

Hence, we are told in the above, that, by our being subject to the powers, we are thereby to gain their esteem: for we are told by the apostle, that "he," viz. the magistrate, "is the minister of God to thee for good," that by thy being afraid thereof, thou mayest be kept to thy duty, and thereby merit his favour and approbation. "But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid: for he beareth not the sword in vain," and he will certainly punish thee according to thy demerit: "for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil."

Further, we are told that we "must needs be subject, not only for fear of wrath, but even for conscience sake," not as barely before men, but as before God who seeth all things. "For this cause pay you tribute also: for they

are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing;" attending upon the state in governing for the public good. And also, "Render, therefore, to all their dues: tribute, to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom; fear, to whom fear; honour, to whom honour." Lastly, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."

Hence, we are ordered in the foregoing to give every one their due; whether tribute, custom, or honour; even whether it be to the king as supreme, or to subordinate governors, that we may owe no man any thing, but to love one another. What is here exprest of love, is a debt which can never possibly be discharged; but ought always, according to the sphere in which we stand, to be paid not only daily, but hourly, to one another, as occasion offers or calls for it: for it is expressly declared in the above, that, by our paying a proper respect thereto, we thereby fulfil the law. And, if we fulfil the law, we certainly, in our conforming thereto, become the children of God. Now, since the gospel taught by Jesus Christ and his apostles requires us to be subject to the higher powers, who at that period were only Heathen governors, How, then, comes it to pass, that some of our different sectaries disobey and resist being subject to christian governors? Hence, if they reject being subject to christian governors, who give to every person his liberty to worship God under his own vine and under his own fig-tree in safety, I am sure

they would far less have been subject to such of the Heathen governors (to whom christians were ordered by the apostles to submit), who never tolerated christianity.

From hence, I am much afraid, that too many who dream of their being christians, have therefore despised their own mercies. Now, since the powers are ordained of God, whosoever therefore shall resist the powers in being subject thereto, resisteth the ordinance of God: and whosoever resisteth the ordinance of God, shall, in return, receive unto themselves damnation, namely such punishment as is due to their demerit. The charge here given and appointed us by the apostles, is not of them alone, but is also required by Jesus Christ himself: for he giveth positive charge to the Jews, that they should "give unto Cæsar" (who was a Heathen governor) "the things that were Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

Further, there are again other sectaries, who submit by paying taxes, and also pray for governors as being lawful; but if the king shall at any time command or require a general fast to be kept for the sins of the land, or day of thanksgiving for mercies received, they will by no means submit thereto—No; and tho' they should throw away as much time otherwise, they will rather work thereon out of contempt, than comply with his majesty's command to serve God according to his request. Now, if any of the Heathen emperors or governors of old, should have required of

the christians to have assembled together in safety, in order to have kept a fast for the sins of the land, and to worship the true God according to their own sentiments, Would they have rejected the command? No, I apprehend not. And, if the christians of old would not have rejected the command of the Heathen emperors to have kept a fast for the sins of the land, they certainly would far less have disobeyed (like our sectarians) the command given by a christian governor in his requiring to have kept a fast for that purpose, as in the above.

Hence, if our legislature or legislative power, does not require the belief of impossibilities or things contrary to reason, and the moral attributes of God, we ought by no means to object against complying; especially when government requires it in such a manner, not contrary, but agreeable to our will, we ought therefore by no means to object; at least, if such do not obey, I am sure they have no cause to give offence. From this, I would have all sects to be thankful for such a good and mild government (as what we are under and subject to) concerning matters of religion: for such as are not thankful and content therewith, are ill deserving the blessings they enjoy, of which thousands would be happy in the opportunity of possessing that which ye despise. Ye false and deluding hypocrites! ye pretend not only to respect and reverence the gospel, but also to know and obey it, when, in works, you expressly deny it; hypocriti-

cally professing one thing, and practising another, as is evident from the above. Further, and to proceed,

These antigovernment gentlemen, in so doing, thereby deny the lawfulness of government; and from this, they not only refuse, but even pretend they ought not to pay sels, taxes, or duties of whatever kind in support thereof. Nor will they raise a process of law against any person by virtue of said authority—No. But to remedy the above defect, they hypocritically employ and put in cash to one of a different sect, to perform all these different offices in their behalf. And, by this their dissimulation, they do not only impose upon themselves, but would have others believe that they evade being subject to said government. And in trusting to such lying vanities, they imagine of God being altogether such a one as themselves.

Hence, it is, therefore, now evident, from the foregoing, that both Christ and his apostles taught christians to be subject even to Heathen princes and governors; but these refined gentlemen impiously refuse to be subject, not only to Heathen, but even Christian governors, who admit of them to worship God according to their own mind, and in whatever manner they themselves think best.

Having proceeded thus far, I shall therefore add another delusive confederacy, namely, that which they express by the appellation of spiritual or solemn leagues, the which have been in no small vogue for generations past,

with some of the above sectarians. Further, and lest they should go into disuse, they have therefore been again and again renewed, as a political engine used by their leaders, on purpose to keep their hearers together. And the better to effect its continuation to their advantage, they bind it upon their hearers and their posterity, from generation to generation. But, if they were not as ignorant in real knowledge as the beasts in the field, they would certainly have known (the vanity of renewing all such conspiracies or agreements), that the obligations thereof can by no means (though intended so by ignorant parents) descend to (as binding on) their children or posterity, more than to the brutes that perish—No: for nothing is binding on posterity by the parents, if it be not things of a temporary nature; but those, *viz.* the moral obligations which we bring with us to the world, and are inseparable from nature, and are neither received nor conveyed but by nature itself, and the obligations we owe in revising them one to another, never are.

But to shew the absurd and arrant folly of keeping up the use of all such leagues, and of their descending to posterity as binding thereon, see the league or agreement entered into by the Americans against a commercial trade with Britain, their mother country, till once they had obtained relief, either by a redress of their grievances or a freedom from that state, according to the demand they required of that nation: Would it not be thought an arrant or

brutish folly to imagine, that a league made by their ancestors was binding on their children or posterity, so as to renew it a hundred years hence after they had gained their freedom, and were altogether independent, and even superior to said nation? However great folly it would be thought in the one, it is just, in every respect, as great folly and distraction in the other: for a league or an agreement, though their posterity may reap its benefit, is no longer binding or of use, than in what it hath served in gaining of its end; for when once the cause is removed, the effect is no longer necessary. And besides all this, if spiritual or solemn leagues, made by parents, were binding on their children or after posterity, as alledged by some of the above sectarians, it could never possibly be necessary, but an ar-rant folly, to renew them a second time: for the renewing of said test may teach every human soul, the false and brutish folly of supposing the obligation of any such leagues binding on posterity. For if such a league was binding, as alledged in the above, on after generations or posterity, the renewing of said league would be, in every respect, just as absurd as to require of a person, after he has given his oath or declaration before a judge, to give and renew the declaration thereof a second time; which repetition would certainly be nothing more than to render the first declaration null and void.

DISSERTATION IX.

Concerning Judicial Astrology.

THERE is one thing, among many others, which I cannot but observe, *viz.* that of astrology, to which too many of mankind are generally so much addicted to, and fond of in the affairs of life. And though much stress is oft-times laid thereon by the credulous and unthinking croud, nothing is to be found therein but deception, falsehood, and deceit. Astrology may be divided into two distinct branches, *viz.* natural and judiciary. Natural astrology belongs to, and treats upon the different phænomenas that arise from natural causes, *viz.* such as the near connection that is, and still remains, among the different planets contained in the solar system: and likewise, of the different influences that each of these planets have, in their various positions, over one another, so as to produce heat and cold, wet and dry weather; and which are supposed to make the alteration of all our different seasons. And that of judiciary or judicial astrology, consists in the foretelling of futurities or future events, by the different courses and positions of the stars or planets in our solar system; as in their substituting them in the place of God; devoting ourselves by

assigning the government and disposal of all our actions, whether good, bad, or indifferent, and fortunes of life, with death and the nature thereof annexed thereunto, as in the above. And thus they assign over our coming into the world, the affairs and business of life, and in whatever manner we are to make our exit therefrom, which is the business of the Creator to dispose of his creatures in their lives and fortunes, whether in good or bad, and of their death or exit, and not of the animal or rational creatures, and far less a piece of mere inanimate matter, void of either sense or action, as set forth by these astrological gentlemen independent of God, who ever rules both in heaven and in earth, in giving unto every one that which he sees most fitting, best, and convenient for them; and who also permits the period of life longer or shorter, and death at last, in such a manner as may turn out for their everlasting good.

Hence, thus they dishonour God, by robbing him of the government of the world, whose province it is to divide unto the inhabitants thereof as he himself sees proper. And thus have they given up with God, both in the affairs of this life, and in death itself, to be acted upon and determined by pieces of mere dead and inanimate matter. And in return, God has therefore given them up to be governed, both in life and in death, by the blind fate, prejudice, or infatuation, of their own minds. Hence, what numbers have claimed the real validity of these absurd and

disgraceful fables, *viz.* their different horoscopes, to which they resign, not only the affairs of this life, but even death itself, namely of what death they shall die in their being removed out of this world?

Further, and as they have been pleased to give up with God in being directed in the government of their affairs both in life, and also in their search after the nature of what kind of death they shall die of at last, God has; therefore, in his just judgment, given them up to their own delusions as the punishment of their demerit, both in the things of life and death itself. Because they gave up with him in seeking after lies, for which cause, he, therefore, permitted all these things to come to pass; whereas, on the contrary, if they had made choice to submit to the will and government of God both in life and in death, none of all these things, whether in life or in death, had seldom if ever come to pass. But, because they refused to submit to the direction, will, and government of God, he therefore permitted them to become a snare, and fall a prey to their own delusions, and the vain imaginations of their own minds.

The above is commonly the case, that, whenever a person, a people, or nation, gives up being directed by God, upon their resisting his will in government, in their being directed by him in the affairs of life, God therefore gives up with them; but never till once they give up with him; on which he thereby lets them become hardened and fall a prey to their

own folly. Nor is this all—No; for numbers of mankind do from this science (though falsely so called), which is nothing else than a mere deceit, whereby they imagine it is possible for them to divine in all manner of futurities, by the influence of the stars or planets in our solar system; and also to foretel the most intricate secrets and devices, by the cutting of cards and casting of cups. And by these they pretend that the employer can be informed in the knowledge of whatever he desires to be acquainted with. And by these different operations they would make people believe, that God gives up with his right and prerogative in the government of the world, in favours of all these their different delusions, whereby they deceive the simple, the ignorant, and unthinking croud. All of which are nothing more than a mere imposition upon the ignorance of mankind; and are not only a shame, but even a disgrace to be heard of amongst any people, who have so much as known or yet heard there is a God, but more especially among those who have the assurance to call themselves christians. All of which are nothing else than the mere devices of Paganism, invented in the days of ignorance, for deceiving the people; and have not only been kept in remembrance, but have again been raked from amongst the very ashes of Heathenism or dregs of Pagan darkness; and received into favour, as if worthy of esteem, by some, who, for want of judgment, call themselves christians.

Hence, all such practices ought to be discountenanced and treated with disrespect, by every person of judgment, and despised by all good men: for the whole thereof is altogether groundless and without foundation; therefore, can never possibly be countenanced of God, who is the first Cause and Creator of all things; and superintends, in the direction and government of the world, among the different tribes of its inhabitants, and affairs of the children of men. So that, such as have betaken themselves to these refuges of lies, have, no doubt, been warming with the sparks of a fire of their own kindling, and sacrificing to their own net, and burning of incense to their own dreg.

Having proceeded thus far in setting the ignorant and idle fancies, which have so long prevailed among the deluded populace, in as just a light as possible, that they and others may be deterred from such detestable practices [which are, no doubt, notoriously impious: for when we give up with God in the direction and government of our lives, and affairs thereof, to mere inanimate matter, we know not to what length we may be left to go, or where we may end at last. This has often been the case with such as have given up and hardened themselves against God, and thereby fallen a sacrifice to their own folly], and having considered this subject as in the foregoing, I shall add thereto as observed by the Marquis Dargens, and is as follows.

“ Madam, says he, I am now come to treat of a science in which you seem to put the greatest confidence; and yet (if I may be so bold as to say it), there is none more false, none more deceitful. Your prejudices have hitherto hindered you from making use of your reason. You have given too much credit to stories and fables, which were told you in your youth; but I flatter myself, I shall thoroughly convince you of your error; and I will shew you the ridiculousness of judicial astrology in so clear a light, that I do not question, but that you will despise it for the time to come, as much as ever the great and wise ancients and moderns have done. This fallacious science has justly been regarded by such great men, as the inheritance of a pack of cheats, who, for vile interest, having duped others and made dupes of themselves, wrap up their predictions in so obscure a manner, and express them in such ambiguous terms, that, like the ancient Pagan oracles, they have always two or three different meanings; and so may be explained, as times, persons, or their own fancy, make it necessary.

It was a custom once at Alexandria, for astrologers to pay a certain tax, which was called the tribute of fools; because it was raised out of the gain that astrologers and fortune-tellers made out of the vain credulity of their followers. What would you think, Madam, says he, of a man who was to determine what he should, or what he should not, do by the cast

of a die? Doubtless, you would laugh at his folly. The decision of an astrologer is full as uncertain as that of a die. Whoever will attempt, says a celebrated author, to gull the world, may be sure to find persons enough who may be easily gulled; and the most ridiculous fooleries will always meet with a welcome reception in some minds, seeing we observe so many people infatuated with judicial astrology. There is a constellation among the stars, which some have been pleased to call *Libra*, or the *Balance*; which is no more like a balance than a wind-mill. This *Balance* is the emblem of justice. Those, therefore, who are born under that constellation, will be just and equitable.

However extravagant this sort of reasoning may appear, it is certain there are some who make use of it, and others who are led by it.

Heretofore people gave much more credit to judicial astrology than they do now. Many persons, by little and little, have been brought off from that vain science; and the study of sound philosophy has cured many of that distemper of the mind. The greatest geniuses in all ages have justly complained of the credulity of the vulgar, and the cheating tricks of astrologers. They are a set of fellows, says Tacitus, that gull princes, and deceive all such as believe in them; they have always been prescribed the city, and yet are always retained.

The greatest part of the world love to be made dupes of, and the generality are easily led away by chimeras and extravagant stories.

The vulgar are more affected with whimsical and romantic notions than plain truth. They will excuse every thing in those that know how to deceive them agreeably, and excite their curiosity. A lie destroys the reputation of an honest man; it makes him suspected of falsehood, even when he speaks the truth; but an astrologer has a right to lie with impunity; and many are so far from reckoning his impostures a crime, that they endeavour to palliate them by plausible arguments. If by mere chance he happens but once to hit upon some notable fact, that is enough to make all his random guesses believed, that he shall pronounce in the name of fate for ever after. There is no notice taken of the lies that he has confidently vented: men only speak of the truth that he hit upon by mere chance. Does an astrologer foretel the death of a prince? If it does not come to pass, the thing drops; nobody attempts to ridicule the pretended prophet; but, if the prince dies, people crowd to the conjurer to know their own fate. There are very few who take upon themselves carefully to examine the reality of the astrologer's skill and learning; they rather, on the contrary, are eager to find out arguments to palliate their own credulity. How many times, says Tully, have I heard astrologers foretel to Pompey, Crassus, and Cæsar, that they should die in a very advanced age in the bosom of their friends, and arrive to the highest pitch of glory and honour? Just the reverse of this prediction befel them; and I cannot imagine how

that, after such visible marks of the falsehood of judicial astrology, any can be so stupidly credulous, as to put any confidence in their blind guesses.

To what purpose is it to desire to know what can never be known? God has not thought it fit to reveal certain secrets. Is it not ridiculous to think that he has communicated them to the stars? An impertinent curiosity has not a little contributed to put judicial astrology into vogue, and give it the credit it has gained. We all readily believe what flatters our hopes. Does astrology promise us riches, honours, and good success, Is it not natural, therefore, for people to give credit to it? And as for those whom it threatens with dangers, their fears, superstition, and care to avoid what is hurtful, are sufficient to make them regard its predictions as lessons of prudence and circumspection. There are few persons who are absolutely content with their present condition, and are not fond of peeping into futurity. There are philosophers who are not of that class. They are sure they can get nothing by knowing what must inevitably come to pass; and that it is a vain thing to torment themselves to no purpose." Further, and to proceed,

"The rules of judicial astrology are so vastly different concerning one and the same subject, that it is impossible to form any certain judgment from those rules. Many of them are even so ridiculous, that one cannot well tell how to go about to confute them seriously.

Among the twelve signs of the Zodiac, there is one called the Ram, another the Bull, and a third Capricorn, which might as well have been called pigeon, dog, and cat. But, because the ram, the bull, and the horned goat, are animals that chew the cud, those who take a purge when the moon is in any of those signs, will be in danger of having their phyfic work upwards. A man must be a thorough paced astrologer to maintain such whimsies; and be an easy ignoramus that can believe them. For the giving these names, rather than any other, to the signs of the Zodiac, is mere caprice and fancy; and, generally speaking, they are no more like the things they are called after, than a wind-mill is like a swallow. The ancients, to accommodate themselves to the fictions of the poets, pretended that justice, disgusted at the scenes of wickedness that are acted upon the stage of this world, fled to heaven; and on this chimerical notion, we are told that women born under that sign will be barren, or at least subject to abortions. Very good. Now, suppose the ancient poets had called that sign Conis, which is called Virgo, would not women think you have been in danger of running mad when the moon, or some other planet, came to be posted under that constellation?

I would gladly hear an astrologer tell me, how he knows that such a sign is more like a woman than a church steeple; and where he will find telescopes of such perfection, as to be capable of shewing this likeness, at the dis-

tance probably of near a hundred millions of miles; till then I cannot see how he can be assured that a vomit will work kindly, if taken when the moon is in Aries. I have as good reason to maintain, on the other hand, that a man will be in danger of spraining his foot if he dance, than, because the sign which he thinks is like a ram, has more the resemblance of a dancer upon a stiff rope. Upon this supposition I can make predictions, if I have a mind, in the same manner that he does; where, amongst a multitude of false ones, I may chance to foretel something that is true. The question, then, would be to know whether his science or mine be the best grounded; and whether or not there be not actually a dancer on the rope in the firmament, as much as a ram or a crab fish. Mr. Bernier has gained the same reputation and glory as all those great men have done before him, who have employed their pens in shewing the falsity of judicial astrology; and I am going, Madam, says he, to quote a passage in that author, which will evidently demonstrate to you the folly of making those twelve houses, into which astrologers divide the starry heaven, and which, according to them, communicate their influence to the planets. From whence, says this philosopher, do these houses take or derive their virtue? Perhaps you will say, from the moveable heaven. But how comes it to pass then, that some one part of that moveable heaven has a happy position in one house, and imme-

diately an unhappy one in another? Does this proceed from the place or situation it is in? or, How can pure space have such effects, and so different one from another? Let it not be said that it is not the houses, but the planets in those houses, that produce these various effects: for as a planet, which is naturally benevolent, becomes malevolent in an unfortunate house, and one that is malevolent becomes much more so, I ask whence this malignity is gained by being in such a house? Methinks you cannot but see, that judicial astrology must needs fall under the weight of this argument. Can any thing be so ridiculous, as to maintain that mere space can communicate so many different effects, and give what it has not? I know you have more good sense than to assent to such chimeras, which are only founded in the vain imaginations of a set of people, who have no taste or idea of the only true and rational philosophy.

And to proceed, consider, Madam, that if the rules of judicial astrology were certain, God would have tied up (as one may say) his own hands; and would thereby have laid us under the greatest necessity imaginable. All our actions, our most secret thoughts, every motion of our bodies, would be engraven in heaven in indelible characters, and we could not have the least mite of free agency. We should be necessitated to evil as well as to good, seeing we must absolutely do whatever is written in the astral book of fate; or otherwise, the record would be false, and the science of

the astrologer a sham. Our fortune depends upon places, persons, opportunities, and our will; and not upon chimerical conjectures, and the fancies of jugglers. Suppose two men born under the same position of the planets; the one happens to be a king, the other a porter, from whence arises the difference? Jupiter would have it so, says the astrologer. But what is this Jupiter? A body that is not endued with knowledge, and can only act influentially. How comes it to pass, then, that it acts at the same time and in the same climate, in so different a manner? From whence arises this influence? or, How can this influence pass through such a vast extent of air? An atom, the least portion of matter, may stop and turn aside, and weaken these pretended particles which are said to proceed from the planets. Besides, I would ask whether or not the stars have one continued regular influence; or, that they vary according to the seasons? If their influence is felt only at certain times, and when the particles which are emitted from them fall upon us, How can the astrologer know the precise time when that will happen, so as to foretel their effects? If their influence be continually regular, from whence comes that prompt and active force, so as to pierce through the vast extent of air, and make its way through all matter that would stop or divert its course, and join itself to the quickness of our passions, from whence the principal actions of our lives have their source and spring? For if the stars direct all our senti-

ments, and govern our whole conduct, their influence must needs act with as much rapidity as our will, seeing it is they which determine it; so that, when a lover resolves to forsake his mistress on account of a favourable glance she bestows on his rival, the influence must be as quick as the lady's glance and the offended lover's thought, as it is that which puts the one upon her coquetry, and the other into a fit of disdain or despair: for astrologers pretend, that even the minutest of our actions are governed by the stars; consequently the broils and reconciliations of lovers must be directed by them. And that, indeed, is one of the master-pieces of their craft, and gains them the most reputation in the world. Every lover has a mind to know whether or not his mistress be faithful to him: the fair sex are still more curious than we are; and these figure slingers find nowhere so much practice as among lovers and their ladies. Judicial astrology imposes upon people as much as love does; and I think myself obliged in conscience, to advise young ladies to lay as little stress upon the predictions of astrologers, as they would do upon the oaths of a fashionable coxcomb.

And to which, I shall add as follows. You promised me, Madam, that you would read Boyle's various thoughts upon comets attentively over, so soon as you were got through that charming book, entitled, *Conversations concerning the plurality of Worlds*; which, you say, makes a proficiency in astronomy so

easy to you. If you do so, the agreeable Fontenelle will furnish you with previous lights, to discover the true meaning of the learned and profound Mr. Boyle; and thus, being made an astronomer by the former, you will easily discover the nullity of astrological influence from the latter. He will shew you demonstratively, that comets (which there is so much noise about) are only common phenomena in the course of nature; and that they have no more influence than the stars or planets. You will be convinced, when you have read his various thoughts, that it is no more surprising that misfortunes should happen after the appearance of a comet, than after the rising or setting of the sun, seeing, according to the common course of nature, there happen great calamities every year in one part of the world or other. It is probable, says this illustrious author, that at whatever hour a Parisian looks out at his window upon Le Pont Michael, he will see people passing in the street; and yet the looks of this Parisian has no influence upon the people that pass therein; every person would pass along, just the same as if the honest man had never looked out of his window. Thus, a comet has no more influence upon events: every thing would have happened just as it did, though no comet had ever appeared, seeing its influence operates not on human affairs.

It would be easy to prove that it is a falsehood to say, that more ill accidents fall out in those years wherein comets appear, than at

other times. And to be convinced of the usual course of things, a man needs only make an estimate from history, of what remarkable good or evil events have been brought about upon the earth, in the space of fifteen or twenty years immediately after the appearance of a comet, and he will find, by comparing them with fifteen or twenty other years past, or at the greatest distance from any such appearance, that the balance will be nearly equal.

As for the opinions of some historians and poets, who were great admirers of prodigies, I have shewn, says he, in my first dissertation, how little regard ought to be paid to them. For indeed, if we were to attend to all the stories which some weak people (who are but a little acquainted with the modern experimental philosophy) fondly relate, we might, with the same reason, give credit to the superstitious fables of old women. Thirteen or any other odd number that chance to sit down together at a table, the overturning of a salt seller, or the cracking of a looking-glass, are with some people omens of the most dangerous consequence. But, in matters of philosophy, the opinion of a Boyle or a Gassendi, is preferable to the testimony of twenty historians, who knew nothing of the nature of comets, but what they have read in other historians, as superstitious as themselves; and we may observe, that the best of authors are generally the least addicted to take notice of prodigies.

Hence, it is no extraordinary thing, if these cheating stargazers, and roguish fortune-tel-

lers, should sometimes hit upon an event: by guessing at things with a shameless confidence, it happens sometimes that they blindly predict the truth. What a stupid archer, says Tully, must he be, who shoots a whole day together, and does not sometimes hit the mark? An Almanack-maker predicts the death of some crowned head in Europe; if he happens to die, all the world speak of that Almanack; if he does not die, nothing is said of it, no more than of many others which are made in different countries, in which other as notable lies have been predicted. Permit me, madam, in concluding this dissertation, to advise you to despise all those sciences heartily, in which there is as little certainty and good sense as there is in judicial astrology."

Having proceeded thus far in exposing such a disgraceful practice, I shall therefore observe and add a most remarkable instance of the above folly, namely, the propagating the wild romances of Pagan darkness, so much relied on as truth by the credulous, the ignorant, and unthinking croud; the tenour of which is as follows.

In the West of North-Britain, in a parish called Fenwick, there arose (from a certain sectarian) one of these filthy and disgraceful dreamers (such as recorded of old), who published a pamphlet consisting of a great many visions, apparitions, and other heathenish prodigies; foretelling such as wars, persecutions, the rise and fall of kingdoms, the decline of

states, the death of princes, and the like; which he, like himself, and every other visionary, has, in a most artful and industrious manner, raked from amongst the ashes of Paganism. The different particulars which he appears to ascribe as being the unavoidable consequences of the planets; all of which he accounts for, as being prognosticated of by the phænomena of his apparitions; the strange and irregular courses, *viz.* the returns of comets, eclipses, and the like. And there he, like another Heathen astrologer, robs God of the government of the world, in his giving over the superintendency thereof to the sun, moon, and stars; and thereby transmutes or changes the true and ever blessed God, for the dead and inactive substances of mere inanimate matter; which, if he had not been, in every respect, as ignorant of natural philosophy, or even of common sense, as the brutes that perish, he would certainly have known the prattling vanity of any such mean, weak, or childish jargon. For he might just as well, in every respect, have alluded the different consequences to which he ascribes the foretelling thereof, to have been effected, prognosticated, or foretold by his going to a convenient place and there to have eased himself, if we may so speak, or done what was necessary, as to either his apparitions, the returns of comets, the eclipses of sun or moon, or to any such phænomenas.

From hence, this soothsayer or visionary writer, like other astrologers of his rank, thereby pikes himself on what he relates of the ex-

crescence of Paganism, to which no person of probity would pay the smallest respect. These few may fairly delineate the ignorance, and exhibit the vanity of all his other pretensions, in whatever he hath fantastically scraped together, and wishes to impose upon the world in place of truth, that nothing can possibly be depended thereon, or respect paid thereto, above the idle unprofitable fancies of children. And may also teach us to be aware against all such as the above sectarian, who ly in wait to deceive the ignorant, the simple, and unthinking crowd.

From hence, they who propagate, patronize, adhere to, and follow after any such wild or abominable practices, deserve not to be ranked among the cultivated tribes of the human race.

Lastly, and to conclude, I shall therefore add, as follows, another gross delusion, not only similar, but near a-kin to the former; and which has long prevailed among the nations, to the disgrace of those who entertain so unworthy and unbecoming notions of God; namely, as that he should admit of devils to act in such an unlimited manner, as if almost altogether independent of him, *viz.* such as in raising of storms; his entering into possession and tormenting of human bodies, such as recorded in the evangelists, but more especially in those whom they call witches, and are said to deal in witchcraft; such as being hurtful in plaguing and tormenting their fellow-creatures. To speak of the last of these, is to what

I shall at present chiefly confine myself, and be satisfied with what has been exprest thereon by others; among whom is the great Mr. Mead, who, in treating upon possessions, *viz.* those who are said to have been possessed of devils, and in reflecting thereon, and in speaking of those who are called witches, observes as follows. Concerning the wild abuse which had accrued from a belief therein, he, like one astonished, expresses himself in the following words.

“ Who, says he, can be otherwise than seized with horror, that recollects how many millions of innocent persons have been condemned to the flames in various nations, since the birth of Christ, upon the bare supposition of witchcraft, while the judges were, perhaps, either blinded by vain prejudices, or dreaded the incensed populace, if they acquitted those whom they had previously judged guilty! Who can be otherwise than shocked, to find Nic. Remigius boasting, as a matter of merit, that he had capitally condemned about nine hundred persons for witchcraft, in the space of fifteen years, in the sole Duchy of Lorrain! And yet, from many histories which he relates of those who suffered, it manifestly appears, that every individual of those condemned persons had no compact with devils, as they themselves imagined; but were really so mad as openly to confess that they had done such feats as are impossible in the nature of things. And certain it is likewise, that the opinion which was prevalent of the power

granted to devils of torturing human bodies and minds, has been several ways made subservient to the subtil designs of crafty men, to the very great detriment and shame of the christian religion. And as to the confessions extorted from the troubled minds of such poor, wretched, and distracted creatures, tormented on every side, the power of imagination is such, that it often, when the animal œconomy is disordered, impresses the mind with the most absurd, false, and impossible things, in as strong a manner as if they were really true. Dr. Mead relates, that he knew a man of letters, who positively asserted that he was big with child, and was vastly anxious for a happy delivery; and that he saw two others, who, when alone, fancied they heard the words of people whispering them in the ear.

Further, a credible author relates, that he met with a woman who told him of numbers of devils in her; and told him what this or that particular devil said, and what they desired to be done, and asked if he did not hear or see the devils. This power of imagination to affect the mind with false images as well as true, accounts for the confession made by some of those unhappy wretches who are called witches, being first impressed, perhaps, by the repeated assertions of their neighbours of their being witches, and having dealings with the devil; and having heard many stories of this sort, and perhaps labouring under bodily disorders, they came at length, by the frequent impressions of the idea, to imagine that they really

did converse with devils, and had entered into compacts with them. And to such a pitch did their imagination arise in persuading them that this was really a fact, that, when brought to a trial, they confessed themselves guilty of the dealings with devils, and of wickedness which they had never perpetrated, though they knew they must suffer death for it. Nor is this any thing more strange, than that a man of letters should torment himself with the persuasion of his being with child; a thing altogether as absurd and impossible in its nature.

To this we may add the many cheats and impostures founded upon this notion, which have been, and are still, from time to time, in one place or other, practised even in our own country, by the many strange and absurd conceits and terrible apprehensions entertained by many among the vulgar, such as are a disgrace to an enlightened age, and nowise consistent with the belief of an all governing providence, and of a good and all powerful God. We, in the present age, have indeed seen all our laws relating to witchcraft entirely abolished, which cannot but be matter of satisfaction to every sensible person. 'I most heartily rejoice,' says the celebrated Dr. Mead in one of his works, 'that I have lived to see all our laws relating to witchcraft entirely abolished; whereas foreign states still retain this barbarous cruelty, and with various degrees of obstinacy, in proportion to their ignorance of natural causes.'

From what has been said of the mischiefs flowing from the delusive opinion, of power being granted to devils to torment human bodies and minds, Who would not wish to find that there is no foundation in scripture for any such groundless opinions?

We may therefore conclude, from what has been exprest in the foregoing, that never any such beings, as what they ignorantly suppose of witches, have existed since God gave being to matter—No; at least, as understood in the vulgar sense of the word, but only in deceit, with that of deception, in what we may call nature strained; but altogether independent of what they call devils or infernal powers: for what is meant by the word *witch*, when properly understood, implies a deceiver. Hence, there is no end of the nonsensical species of devils, such as ghosts, *viz.* spectres, fairies, and the like, recorded by the credulous, the ignorant, and unthinking crowd—No: for by these and such idle things do they, like fools, amuse themselves. But, to proceed,

From hence, I shall just barely add one single reflection near a-kin and of a piece with the former, *viz.* the received opinion of what they call unlucky or unfortunate days; on which they imagine that devils have a more enlarged power to do mischief thereon than on other days. And also, of what they call an evil eye; and of evil spirits having a power to hurt not only human, but those of other animal bodies, such as the brutal tribes. These, with many other disgraceful, idle, and absurd, no-

tions, are nothing more than only the mere caprice, whim, or images, of distorted and fantastical brains. I would, therefore, advise such as have any regard to God and their own characters, to despise and give up with all such vanities. Let us, therefore, entirely banish from our minds all thoughts of this kind, as are liable to bring us into disgrace. And with these every other superstitious notion and vain deceit of witchcraft, and the like, which derogate from the honour of God, and tend to possess our minds with an unnecessary fear of other things; such as the idle imaginations of superstition; supplying the place of that veneration and reverence which we ought actually to have for God. From hence, let us live in fear of him and of no other invisible power, being entirely assured, that his dominion over the earth is supreme; and that no invisible being has any share with him, nor can interpose to hurt mankind: "For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, let the earth, therefore, rejoice and be glad;" and let none of its inhabitants live in dread of the power of any evil being. Strange indeed! that people in a land of light, *viz.* knowledge, should believe the interposition of evil spirits, namely the power of what is called witchcraft, and other such like absurd and superstitious notions. Hence, whatever people may think of it, they actually derogate from God's honour; and thereby fill themselves with terrifying apparitions, of which there is no foundation for entertaining such strange and absurd

notions, *viz.* such as are even a disgrace to human reason, either as to think, speak, or give place to.

Lastly, And to conclude, some are of opinion that dæmons or evil spirits, witches and the like, were more frequent or common in the world formerly than now. But the difference thereof is altogether owing to former or ancient ignorance, and that of present knowledge: for ignorance meets with many devils, but knowledge is what neither hears, sees, nor meets with any—No, not so much as one. But, I would to God that the above delusions in deceiving the world, had ended or stopt here; but that is what they have not: for the various miracles, or rather lies, ingrafted on the gospel since the days of the apostles, but more especially by Roman Catholics, are almost without number. Many of which are so palpably gross, that no persons, if not divested of their reason, can possibly give place or credit thereto for truth.

T H E
G O S P E L R E C O V E R E D
F R O M I T S
C A P T I V E S T A T E .

B O O K X I I .

Consisting of some various short Sketches, upon useful Subjects, not digested in the former Books.

S K E T C H I .

Of War, and of the unlawfulness thereof, if it be not upon the Defensive.

TH E R E is a calamity, however little considered, which is certainly, of all others, the most hurtful and destructive to human life, namely, that of war: for it generally carries devastation along with it into every border and land into which it comes. Hence, that of war has, in all ages, proved the most hurtful and destructive enemy to the human race. For though death conquers all, it is the ap-

pointment of God; but war, though tolerated by God, like many other disorders, is, no doubt, brought on by giving way to our own folly, by making a wrong use of these most noble passions which are endued and bestowed on us of God. War is generally occasioned by the lawless ambition of a few individuals, by their wickedly lording over, or coveting, the rights of their neighbours; for whose folly, a whole nation must suffer, even the innocent in place of the guilty. And sometimes war proceeds from the folly of placemen, namely, such as are appointed to command, by their over-bearing behaviour to those, in other nations, of like station with themselves; and though perhaps nothing more than only a servant, behold how great a flame a little or small spark kindleth! Nevertheless, though the cause of said calamity sometimes takes place, as in the above, war is too often the consequence of an arbitrary, oppressive, haughty, or insolent prince, and those that attend thereon, as observed of old, saying, "Wo be unto thee, O land, whose king is a child!" or rather, whose king is short of understanding! for a wise king maketh a happy people; but destruction is wrapt up in the bosom of fools. Further, and to proceed,

Though war is generally occasioned as in the above, the innocent are always they who are led to suffer therein instead of the guilty. I do not mean purely innocent, but innocent of the cause in which their lives are lost, or

unlawfully thrown away. Alas! what a pity is it, that the guilty are not exposed to the fate occasioned by themselves, instead of the innocent! Hence, if the guilty were exposed to suffer, and the innocent to escape, this, I apprehend, would certainly put a stop to the effusion of much human blood. But, to remedy the defect of this destructive calamity, whenever a difference or contest takes place betwixt two or more nations, refer the case or circumstances thereof to the determination of two distinct governments of other nations, and, if necessary, let them make choice of a third to decide the matter. But be sure let the person or persons on whatever side, who were the first aggressors, be punished for causing such trouble unto the nations. And that that nation who will not submit to the determination of those to whom the whole circumstances were submitted, all nations ought to contribute to their subjection, that they, in return for their contumacy, be made an example and a servant of nations for a certain period; and if they persist after said period, let them be continued therein for the future.

This method observed in the above, would not only prevent the effusion of much human blood, but would even punish the guilty, and thereby prevent thousands, if not millions, of the innocent from suffering unjustly; and of their being hurried, without thought, into eternity.

Further, and if a nation covets any part of

their neighbour's possessions, let them make a lawful purchase thereof the same as those of other estates and commodities. And, in case of being overcharged therein, let the value or estimate thereof be referred to the determination of two or more of the neighbouring nations as in the foregoing: for I am sure the expence of war, exclusive of the blood shed therein, will make a purchase a great many times above the value of what may be put thereon. And besides all this, it is a bad cause that will not admit of being referred. From hence, it may be objected, Why are one or more of the nations to be troubled with the affairs of other nations? But, in answer to this objection, one nation, when compared with the great society or nations of the world, is but like one family to a society; and is not one part of a family or society always to act for the good of another? But to proceed,

War is a subject which has been disputed whether it be lawful for one nation to go to war with, or rather against another; but I think the matter abundantly evident from what follows. An offensive war is what can never possibly be supposed lawful, but a defensive certainly is. For instance, if one person shall attack another, either in his person or in his property, whether public or private, Has not he that is attacked a right to defend himself in that wherein he is attacked? And if a private person, which is only one of the community, has a right to defend his property, if the whole community is attacked,

they certainly enjoy the same privilege in defending that which is their own just and lawful property. Hence, if the defending of property be lawful, it must, therefore, certainly be unlawful in either he or they who attacks it.

Further, it is also alledged in vindication of war, that it is the appointment of God; but if the appointment of God, it must, therefore, certainly proceed from one of the two following causes, or perhaps both, *viz.* the punishing a nation for its wickedness; or for cutting off those that are troublers of the peace, and hurtful to the society among whom they live, who themselves, alone, are generally employed in that office. To this last it is objected, that armies are not all made up of such as are here exprest; though indeed, the greatest number are composed of such, some of whom by no means are; and yet all, without respect of persons, are liable to share promiscuously in the same fate together. But to this I shall add the observation of a celebrated author on this subject, which is as follows.

“ But though war in itself appears to be lawful; yet, a proper proceeding in it is necessary to make it so. First, in the beginning of it, a due regard is to be had to the laws of justice, prudence, and charity. It does not seem to be any sufficient or just cause to commence war against any people, because they are not of the true religion: for who hath committed the judgment of such people to any other king or people? nor even, if ano-

ther people hath injured us, is war to be commenced, as long as there is any room for hopes of settling the matter by words without coming to blows. Agreeable to this was the established custom of the Jews, Greeks, and Romans, of first demanding satisfaction before declaring war. If the king or people, with whom we have matter of dispute, is willing to refer it to arbitration, then we must desist from war. Nor ought it to be reckoned a just cause for commencing a war against any neighbouring state, because we fear their growing power will one day or other be dangerous to us. Even when there is a just cause for war, we ought to consider well whether it is best to commence it; because we know not what will be the event of war; and the calamities of it must be felt by ourselves as well as by our enemies. Nor may it be in our power to put an end to war when we will, though it is to commence it. But chiefly by a christian, ought to be considered what christian charity or love requires of him: for if St. Paul says, dissuading from law-suits, "Why rather do ye not suffer injury?" How much more ought we to suffer it, rather than have recourse to that method of doing ourselves right, as involves both good and bad in the same evils? A defence of one's private person brings solely him who attacks us into danger. Capital punishments are appointed only against criminals; but in war, the innocent, no less than the guilty, perish and are spoiled. Seneca, a Heathen writer, recommends to a prince, that he

should be as sparing of other mens blood as of his own; and to understand, that being but a man himself, he ought not to make a prodigal use of mens lives. As christians we are commanded to live as much as possible in peace with all men; and those wars only seem to be christian ones, which are undertaken to avoid greater evils than what war will occasion. In the carrying on of war, our covenants are to be religiously observed; and none is to be hurt who are at peace with us; as little blood as possible is to be shed in battle; no cruelties are to be exercised towards those who are made prisoners; nor against those who surrender, or children, or women, husbandmen, or any others that are weak and defenceless. In regard to putting an end to war, we ought to have regard that it is not protracted through anger, desire, and revenge, and that it may appear that we fought for nothing by war but peace; which we shall give proof of, if we cease from war upon any tolerable concession of the enemy; or after a victory, we take away nothing from the conquered but the power of hurting us. In regard to allies, they neither act according to justice or charity, who indiscriminately promise assistance in war, without any regard to the justness or unjustness of it; and even those who act in quality of soldiers, ought not to act in a war, which they are convinced in their own minds is unjust on the side they are engaged on. And they who make war their trade, and act in it on no other consideration but for the sake of gain, are

guilty of a grievous crime, in acting with deliberation contrary to Christ's law; and thereby are not christians.

Hence, they who only fight for hire, not as allies or in defence of property, are only butchers of mankind; therefore, ought to have no existence under heaven either as a state or people, without being divided among the nations. Now, upon the whole, it is certainly becoming all as christians, and what is most consistent with their profession, rather to suffer injury than to shed human blood, although it is of those who are faulty and injurious to us." And to proceed,

Neither are we to wage war against any people (like those nominal christians in former generations) on account of their religious sentiments being different from ours—No; for this would not only be a heinous guilt and profane wickedness, but next to an unpardonable crime in the sight of both God and man.

Further, to these we may add that which is exprest by Jesus Christ, which is as follows. Matth. v. 43, 44, 45: "Ye have heard that
"it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that
"curse you, do good to them that hate you, and
"pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven."

Hence, if we were thus to follow Christ's

precept and example in loving our enemies, those who were our enemies would, thereon, become our most stanch friends: so that, we could have no enemies at all. But instead of acting as in the above, we, in opposition to what Christ hath commanded in forgiving injuries, hate and repell force by force, and thereby renounce all right and claim to Christ's religion; therefore, are by no means christians. Further, and to proceed,

Both nations and people, from a mistaken notion of themselves, are nearly alike. Few of mankind see their own faults, or behold the beam in their own eye; but are never short-sighted in perceiving a mote in their neighbour's eye, even though never so small. Similar thereto, they always think their own nation the best and in the right; but he that reforms his life, always begins at home. And it is the above in not seeing our own faults, and in esteeming ourselves better than our neighbours when we do not deserve it, by which hell is filled; and not only nations, but even both kingdoms and empires, are brought to irretrievable ruin.

But with respect to war and the causes thereof, some are of opinion, that God, when a nation becomes wicked, stirreth up another to punish it. But, in answer to which, punishment is a natural consequence inseparable from guilt: for whenever a nation becomes rich, it generally becomes proud, haughty, insolent, and domineering over the rest of the nations, and thus begets many implacable e-

nemies. And the nation who finds itself a match in humbling it, glories in punishing such a powerful, such an insolent, and haughty foe, for the good and safety of its neighbours; but oft-times to its own loss, it becomes guilty of said predominante and insolent behaviour; and thereby exposeth itself to the same degree of punishment. And thus one revolution of states generally comes to attend and succeed another, to the loss and depopulation thereof.

From hence, I cannot properly conclude this subject, without observing as follows. One nation no sooner comes to fall out or commence war against another, than the spiritual guardians of each nation engaged therein, immediately embark and take part in the quarrel, by addressing heaven in the most solemn manner, that God may subdue and grant them victory over their enemies: the determination of which they mistrust, by not having God to be judge who are in the right, that he may give the victory thereto. Nor do they wish to submit to his decision, without being in their favours—No; but they request that they (though never so unjust the cause and ill-deserving) may have the victory. But this I would to God, if I may so speak, that they were but just as wise and well directed in their requests, as the wife who is said to have fought with her own cat, who, in time of said battle, desired that God might stand with the righteous. But I much doubt, that she, like

the above gentlemen (however wrong), thought she had the best side of the cause. Thus both sides engaged therein, represent God as the most partial and unjust of all other beings, in praying that he may be on their side, without respect to the justness thereof.

Further, And all they require, however so unjust the cause (as observed in the foregoing), that God may give them the victory, though ever so wrong or ill-deserving of it; but tho' the whole human race should address or petition God to be on their side in a bad or unjust cause, he will not hear them. Hence, as the triumphing of the wicked is but short, he, indeed, may permit them to increase their wickedness, and thereby hasten to fill the cup of their iniquities; but not on account of their address. But further,

When we come to address God on such occasions, we should never dictate to nor direct him—No; but plead that he may dictate to and direct us, desiring that as he is just, and knows all things, that he may be on the side of those who are in the right, whether themselves or those that are against them: for this will certainly be the case, whether they desire it or not. And if we be wrong, we ought to request that we may be convinced thereof; and also, that he may bring about a speedy issue or conclusion of this and all such wars. For, as only one side, and not two, can possibly be in the right, one and none but one, has a right, according to justice, to expect or look for victory.

Hence, I have, though not without astonishment, oft-times observed the procedure of these refined gentlemen; which to me, was an incontestable evidence of the unjustness of the cause in which they had embarked. And the reason for which they addressed God is, that he may be on their side and give them the victory; and perhaps had continued the same for six, eight, or ten years together, without any returns of their address; which, to me, appears an incontestable evidence of their having embarked in a bad and unjust cause; or else the God to whom they made their address, behoved to have been a God afar off, and not a God at hand, when they had no returns for the space of six, eight, or ten years together. Hence, I repeat it again, from this we may justly infer, they behoved either to be ill heard, embarked in a bad cause, or else the God to whom they prayed has, no doubt, been a God afar off, on business, or asleep, when so long before they could have a return of the address made to him.

S K E T C H II.

Of Duelling.

TH E R E is an evil which deserves our particular notice, and ought certainly to be discouraged, *viz.* that of duels. This practice is too much used with men of rank,

who ought rather to be an example; and therefore ought to discourage all such unlawful behaviour. The practice of which, they found upon what they call an attacking of their honour; and suppose themselves disgraced if they do not give a challenge to him from whom they imagine they have received the affront; and therefore the affair must be decided by a duel. The rise of which folly generally proceeds from the fumes of liquor, when people are in their cups; even at a period when a man's senses are obliged to retire. Now, what is man, when dispossessed of reason, but a mere temporary fool? Hence, one would suppose that a gentleman would think it below his dignity, either to take notice of the expressions, or to answer, let be to challenge, a fool: for a person, when in liquor, is by no means to be supposed wise. A man, indeed, may chance to be in company with a fool; but he only makes himself a fool, by giving heed to answer the expressions which he produces in the heat of his folly. So, from this I apprehend, that all foolish expressions, when as in the above, ought certainly to be forgot. For the expressions of a man in the fumes of liquor, when at his cups in speaking rashly, are no more to be regarded, than if he were insane. For instance, if a person under a phrenzy should sell an estate of a thousand a year for the petty sum of a few shillings, would he wish, when recovered from his complaint, to confirm his bargain, to the loss not only of himself, but posterity? No, I appre-

hend not. If, therefore, not willing to confirm the one, he ought far less the other, namely the throwing away his life or the life of him to whom he hath given the challenge; which, when lost, can never possibly be recalled, or recover that which he has most wantonly thrown away. But to proceed,

The only method, therefore, to discourage duelling, which is nothing more than the effects of madness, and a badge of wanton folly, is to disgrace all such who either challenge or obey the summons and engage therein, by divesting them of their titles and honours for life, if not wantonly cut off as in the above. And that such titles descend to those who fill up their place at their decease: for why ought posterity to suffer loss by the follies of those who were before them? And if an officer, he ought besides to be divested of his post: for if a gallant commander, Why ought his country to be robbed thereof through an act of such arrant folly? Observing the above, would, I apprehend, suppress the folly of such a vice. But, if any person thinks I have spoken amiss, I hope he will be pleased to forgive, as I do not wish to give offence to any.

But, upon the whole, if government were to lay the above vice under a severe prohibition, so as to make the serving any person with a challenge capital, and him that receiveth it to be disgraced, if not reporting the challenger upon receipt thereof; by using such measures, I apprehend, it would, therefore,

banish all such mad and unlawful practices, and thereby bring them into disuse amongst men: for why should the state be robbed of some of its most useful members, by the madness of such arrant folly?

To this I shall but just barely mention another or second evil practised, which is, in express words, a disgrace to human nature, *viz.* that of slaving, in buying and selling their fellow creatures, the same as the brutal tribes. But the apology used to take off this infamy, is, of its being of ancient date, and practised in the early ages of the world, by those whom they call God's chosen or peculiar people, *viz.* Abraham, Jacob, and his posterity. But, in answer to this apology, a continuation in vice will never alleviate the crime—No; but increase its aggravation. And instead of making it a lawful precedent, will rather prove of such never having been chosen of God, according to the received opinion: for those whom they bought and sold had, in every respect, just as good a right to buy and sell them, even they by whom they were bought and sold, and likewise every one who use such unlawful practices: for not one of the human race has a right from God to enslave or take away another's freedom in life: for each thereof are equal, and, in every respect, as free by nature as another. And who knows but such who are and have been enslaved in this world, may have it in their power to make slaves of those, by whom they were enslaved here, in a future state.

Hence, there is another, or third evil, which deserves our particular notice, which is of people agreeing on the price of whatever commodity, and upon the alteration of market, or what not, they will retract and not stand to their agreement, except bound thereto by write, or that which is established by law. But what is man, if his word be not equally good as his write? If he thinks he has got the advantage, would he not stand thereto? Those agreements when people are at their cups, I do not think they are legal, if both parties be not satisfied therewith when fresh; because one by said means, may thereby take the advantage of another.

SKETCH III.

Of Infection, and the Consequences with which it is attended.

ACCIDENTS and infection are both against life, if exposed thereto; and if against life, they ought certainly to be avoided for safety. And not only this, but accidents and infectious complaints spareth neither age nor sect of like constitutions, when exposed thereto, namely infection. Hence, and since this be the case, I would therefore have every person strive to be aware as much as possible against exposing themselves as in

the above, except in that which cannot be avoided. But, when this is the case, preventatives ought, therefore, to be used against infections of whatever kind. But the common phrase, in reply to the above, is, that people will not die till their time come. But, in answer to this foolish objection, people oft-times, by unnecessarily exposing themselves, thereby make their own time: for they may just as well advance, that a person may expose himself to the drinking of strong or intoxicating liquors, and not be drunk till his time come. But I tell you of a truth, that the person, in his exposing himself thereto, makes the time, and not providence. But, to proceed,

I know some may, indeed, object against what is here exprest, of people exposing themselves to infection by visiting such as are under infectious complaints. Numbers, no doubt, of both men and women visit the sick; and, though exposing themselves, receive no infection. But, in answer to this objection, all constitutions are not alike: some are more liable to infection than others. And though some may escape without being hurt, the infection may chance to be carried along in their clothes, and thereby communicated to others, which may cost them their life.

What is here exprest in the foregoing, has perhaps, though not always, too often been the case. But it may be objected, if no persons are to go nigh the sick, they would even die for lack of assistance. But, in answer thereto, if the trouble is infectious, let some

person of a hardy constitution attend thereon, and use preventatives for that purpose; and before they mix with society, let them wash their clothes, according to the Jewish law, and thereby cleanse them of the infection, in case of its lying latent therein, and being carried abroad to the hurt of others. But some may further object, saying, are they to be deprived in time of their distress, of people going to put up a petition for them? In answer to which, he who desires to be so friendly, can, in every respect, be just as well heard of God, though at a thousand miles distance, as when present with the person in distress. Further, and to proceed,

Infections, fevers, and other infectious troubles, are commonly brought on by people exposing themselves, as in the above. But this is not always the case—No: for troubles, especially fevers, are known to arise from different causes; such as, from a weakness in the constitution; and sometimes from stresses, or perhaps from both. Nevertheless, though produced as in the foregoing, they are oft-times carried abroad, and diffused to others, as in the above. And fevers communicated by infection, are generally more dangerous than such as are brought on otherwise; therefore, people cannot be too much aware against infection. But to proceed,

Infections are oft-times not only received, but carried abroad and communicated to others, by visiting the sick; which too many

are fond of doing, though of no advantage to the patient; and sometimes it is communicated in thronged assemblies, either by the breaths, or by infections preserved in clothes: and of which people cannot be too much aware against, especially in resorting thither, when infectious distempers prevail. People, I acknowledge, oft-times imagine their neighbours will take it amiss if they do not call for them in their distress; but their not calling is no loss to the distressed, and is right in not exposing themselves to the infection to which they are liable, as well as the distressed they intend to visit.

Further, but this I very well know, that the ignorant and unthinking crowd, are they who commonly despise every advice to their own safety and advantage; and also are generally they who suffer and fall a prey to their own inconvincible folly. But he that maketh a proper use of the powers bestowed on him by God, avoids, as much as possible, every appearance of evil: for self-preservation is the first law of nature, and an incumbent duty on every soul of man. And not only this, but in paying a proper attention to our own safety, against disorders to which we may be exposed and are liable to, is certainly the surest method, not only to save ourselves, but also to convey a sound and wholesome constitution to posterity. For instance, there was never a people more healthful, or multiplied to a greater degree, than the Jews or tribes of Israel, which was all owing to the above. For

there was never a people more attentive against infection, and to the cleanliness and wholesomeness of their food, and careful in preserving their constitution than the Jews: for they acted in cleanliness and wholesomeness of food, also in care of constitution, even to a nicety itself. This is no more than what is evident from the Jewish law: for if a man or a woman had though only but an issue in their flesh, they, after being cleansed or made whole thereof, were obliged to wash not only their flesh, but even their clothes, in running water; and were to abstain from company for seven days together, after being healed of their complaint. And also, if any person but touched the unclean person, or even any thing whereon the unclean person sat, he was counted as unclean; and was obliged to wash his clothes, and bathe himself in running water, and be unclean until the even. This command in washing their clothes (not in stagnant or stinking, but) in running water, was, in order to remove the infection in case of lying latent therein, and thereby prevent its being carried abroad to the hurt of others.

Hence, but when people, for want of judgment, as observed in the foregoing, are not possessed of as much sense as to be afraid of danger, despise advice, and, like Mahometans, run in contempt against counsel, they oft-times fall a prey to their own obstinacy; and sometimes others, from misfortune, have the infection thereby communicated to them, and fall a prey thereto, through the brutish igno-

rance and obstinacy of those observed in the above, to the loss of society, who have not as much sense as to be afraid of evil. But for illustration of the above, I shall here quote as express thereon by a celebrated author, which is as follows.

“Most diseases are infectious. Every person ought, therefore, as far as he can, to avoid all communication with the diseased. The common practice of visiting the sick, though well meant, has many ill consequences. Far be it from us to discourage any act of charity or benevolence, especially towards those in distress; but we cannot help blaming such as endanger their own or their neighbour's lives by a mistaken friendship, or an impertinent curiosity.

The houses of the sick, especially in the country, are generally crowded from morning till night with idle visitors. It is customary, in such places, for servants and young people, to wait upon the sick by turns. It would be a miracle, indeed, should such always escape. Experience teaches us the danger of this conduct. People often catch fevers in this way, and communicate them to others, till at length they become epidemic.”

Hence, it may be argued, that a person may go in where the diseased is, and not be infected, and yet be smote therewith at some future period. But in answer to which, peoples' constitutions or habits of body are changeable, and perhaps not many days in one state; there-

fore, may be infected at one time, though not at another. But further,

“ It would be thought highly improper for one who had not had the small pox, to wait upon a patient in that disease; yet, many other fevers are almost as infectious as the small pox, and not less fatal. Some imagine, that fevers prove more fatal in villages than in great towns, for want of proper medical assistance. How far that is true we will not pretend to say; but we are inclined to think, that it rather proceeds from the cause above mentioned.

Were a plan laid down for communicating infection, it could not be done more effectually, than by the common method of visiting the sick. Such visitors not only endanger themselves and their connections, but likewise hurt the sick. By crowding the house, they render the air unwholesome; and by their private whispers and dismal countenances, disturb the imagination of the sick and depress his spirits. Sick persons, especially in fevers, ought to be kept as quiet as possible. The sight of strange faces, and every thing that disturbs the mind, hurts them.

The common practice in country places, of inviting great numbers of people to funerals, and crowding them in the same apartment where the corpse lies, is another way of spreading infection. The infection by no means dies with the patient. In many cases it rather grows stronger as the body becomes putrid. This is peculiarly the case of those who die of

malignant fevers, or other putrid diseases. Such ought not to lie long unburied; and people should keep at a distance from them. It is very common for people, after attending the funeral of a friend, to be seized with the same disease of which he died, and to share the same fate.

It would tend greatly to prevent the spreading of infectious diseases, if those in health were kept at a proper distance from the sick. The Jewish Legislator, among many other wise institutions for preserving health, has been peculiarly attentive to the means of preventing infection, or defilement as it is called, either from a diseased person or dead body. In many cases, the diseased were to be separated from those in health; and it was deemed a crime even to approach their habitations. If a person only touched a dead body, he was appointed to wash himself in water, and to keep for some time at a distance from society.

Infectious diseases are often communicated by clothes. It is extremely dangerous to wear apparel which has been worn by the diseased; as infection will lodge in it a long while, and afterwards produce very tragical effects. This shews the danger of buying at random the clothes which have been used by other people.

Infectious disorders are frequently imported. Commerce, together with the riches of foreign climes, brings us also their diseases. These do often more than counterbalance all the advantages of that trade, by means of which they are introduced. It is to be regret-

ed, that so little care is commonly taken, either to prevent the introduction or spreading of infectious diseases. Some attention, indeed, is generally paid to the plague; but other diseases pass unregarded.

Infection is often spread by jails, hospitals, &c. These are frequently situated in the very middle of cities or populous towns; and when infectious diseases break out in them, it is impossible for the inhabitants to escape. Were the magistrates to pay any regard to the health of the people, this evil might be easily remedied. Many are the causes which tend to diffuse infection through populous cities. The whole atmosphere of a large town, is one contaminated mass, abounding with every kind of infection, and must be pernicious to health. The best advice that we can give to such as live in cities, is, to choose an open situation; to avoid narrow, dirty, crowded streets; to keep their own houses and offices clean; to admit the fresh air every day into their apartments; and to be as much abroad as their time will permit.

It would tend greatly to prevent the spreading of infectious diseases, were proper nurses every where employed to take care of the sick. This might often save a family, or even a whole town, from being infected by one person. We do not mean that people should abandon their friends or relations in distress—No; but only to put them on their guard against being too much with those who are afflicted with diseases of an infectious nature.

Such as wait upon the sick in infectious diseases, ought to stuff their noses with tobacco, or some other strong smelling herb, as rue, tanfy, or the like. They ought likewise frequently to sprinkle the room where the patient lies, with vinegar or other strong acids; and to avoid the patient's breath as much as they can.

However easy these hints may seem; yet a proper attention to them, would save many lives. A fever, or any other infectious disease, seldom breaks out in a family, but it affects the most of them; and frequently seizes every individual. The scenes of calamity and distress produced by this means, are too often witnessed by those who attend the sick.

Young people are peculiarly liable to catch infection; and therefore, ought to be kept at the greatest distance from the diseased. Their minds are easily affected with scenes of distress, and they often catch diseases, even by the force of imagination. We would not only recommend to magistrates to take proper measures to prevent the spreading of infectious diseases, but also to masters of families. A single servant may spread a disease amongst a whole family, which may prove fatal to many of them. For this reason, when a servant is seized with a fever, or other infectious disease, he ought to be kept in some separate apartment, or rather sent to an hospital or infirmary. Servants would not only be taken better care of in this way, but fatal diseases might be often prevented. Infection is often caught by sleeping with

the diseased. Every person knows that this is the case in consumptions of the lungs; but other diseases are infectious as well as consumptions; nay, we hardly know any disease that is not so in degree. If a sound person communicates health, surely a diseased one must have the contrary effect. Were this attended to in the choice of companions for life, it would save many from a premature end.

Not only the diseases of the body, but also the diseases of the mind, are infectious. For this reason, our companions ought to be of a sound mind, as well as a sound body. A melancholy person, for example, diffuses a gloom all around him; and he generally taints the minds of his companions with the temper of his own. Those who would be healthy and happy, ought, therefore, to associate with the young, the chearful, and good-humoured. To these I shall add the passions, which have great influence upon the constitution, and are as follows.

The passions have great influence, both in the cause and cure of diseases. How the mind acts upon matter, will, in all probability, ever remain a secret. It is sufficient for us to know, that there is established a reciprocal influence betwixt the mental and corporeal parts; and that whatever disorders the one, likewise hurts the other.

The passion of anger ruffles the mind, distorts the countenance, hurries on the circulation of the blood, and disorders the whole vital and animal functions. It often occasions

fevers with other acute diseases; and sometimes brings on sudden death. This passion is peculiarly hurtful to the delicate, and those of weak nerves. I have known a hysteric woman lose her life by a violent fit of anger: all such ought to guard against the excess of this passion with the utmost care.

It is not always in our power to prevent being angry; but we may surely avoid harbouring resentment in our breast. Resentment preys upon the mind; it occasions the most obstinate chronical disorders, and gradually wastes the constitution. Nothing shews true greatness of mind more than to forgive injuries; it promotes the peace of society, and greatly conduces to our own ease, health, and felicity.

Such as value health should avoid violent gusts of anger, as they would the most deadly poison. They ought never to indulge resentment, but to endeavour at all times to keep their minds calm and serene. Nothing tends so much to the health of the body, as a constant tranquillity of mind." Buchan's Family Physician,

The influence of fear, in occasioning and aggravating diseases, is also very great, and has been hurtful to many; but on this I shall not at present insist.

Hence, what is here express'd, may therefore teach us, how much we ought to respect the safety of our constitutions, both for our own good and the good of those who depend upon us. And if necessary to such upon whom o-

thers depend, to be careful as in the above, it is likewise necessary, that all such as depend thereon, or on themselves, may learn and be careful thereof also.

SKETCH IV.

Of Inoculation, and the Duty which Parents owe to Children in the performance thereof.

IN reflecting on the different evils to which mankind are so much exposed and subject to, I know none more calamitous and destructive to the human system, than that unparalleled and most epidemical distemper, viz. the small pox, by which not only thousands, but even millions, of infants, with those of youth, are swept off the stage, and thereby discharged from life. To prevent this calamitous disorder, God, in his goodness, was pleased to grant the following discovery, viz. that of inoculation, in order that he might thereby put a stop to its fatal progress, in prevailing against the children of men. But this blessed discovery was no sooner made, than immediately suppressed and put a stop to by the priests, who, of all others, ought certainly to have been its greatest promoters. But these spiritual gentlemen (take them in general) have, in all ages, been more to the hurt and loss of mankind, than ever they were profitable or to the good thereof. But this disco-

very, though not only discouraged, but even almost altogether banished through the influence of the clergy, was again revived by some of the most great and able physicians; among whom was the great and celebrated Doctor Mead, Sydenham, Jurin, and others, who have abundantly proved the utility of inoculation, by the immense difference in number betwixt those who die of the natural smallpox, and those who die of the inoculation.

The evidence which providence gives in favours of this discovery, *viz.* inoculation, is so great, as that in some places which I have heard and been creditably informed of, seven have died out of ten, according to the calculation, in the ordinary way; whereas, not one of an hundred died of the inoculation, which difference certainly puts it beyond all dispute; so that, there is not the smallest room left for to reason against it. And yet, after all, tho' providence has given such an immense balance in favours of inoculation, it is still withstood by the credulous, the ignorant, and unthinking crowd, who, through the darkness of a bigoted superstition, are incapable to discern the goodness of God manifested therein. Among whom, according to the degree of ignorance they possess, none are more insensible of the goodness and favour of God, manifested in such a blessed discovery for the good of mankind, than those of sectarians and their leaders, who strive to keep the world in darkness.

To which we may add, of all other enemies

to mankind, that of superstition is certainly the greatest: for, in express words, it actually benumbs the judgment; and thereby darkens the understanding to such a degree, that they can never possibly perceive the truth—No; for till once delivered therefrom, they never possibly can. For a person may just as well pretend he can see to thread a needle in fifty fathom water, as one stolen or kicked out of his reason by his priest, and thereby sunk in superstition, can perceive the truth; yea, the one is just, in every respect, as impossible as the other. For the bulk of mankind are so much stolen out of their judgment by their priests, and thus blinded through the delusion of superstition, through which they are, in some respects, become incapable to perceive almost any one thing hurtful either to soul or body. For a person immersed in which, as observed in the above, is, in every respect, as incapable to perceive the truth so as to take hold thereof, as a blind man is incapable to shew from a sun-dial what o'clock it is thereon at 12 o'clock at night. But, to return,

Now, since ignorance is such a powerful enemy against such a blessed discovery, I would, therefore, recommend the consideration thereof to the legislature, that an express act of parliament should be given to cure the ignorance of the public, and thereby oblige every particular parent or parents to inoculate their children, before they arrive at one, two, three, or four years of age, according to whatever time physicians shall judge most proper for

that purpose. And I put not the smallest doubt, that if once people were accustomed thereto, they would look thereon as being, in every respect, as great a duty as what they do of baptism itself. And as for such as are of mean circumstances, they ought to be inoculated either at the expence of the public, or of the county in which they live; or that, by putting a moderate estimate on each operation, they may thereby incite people to comply with that which is their indispensable duty. And, in order to encourage the attention of physicians, nothing should be given for those who mis-give. And also, lest people should neglect the time limited, there should be persons appointed to inform the public, and exact double upon each neglect thereof; except lawful reasons can be produced for it. And also, that which is exacted, should go for embursing the expence of such who have nothing to pay. And though some at first should complain, and think it hard to be subjected by law to the performance of this duty, it is only such as would complain, who approved heartily of the Jewish legislature, such as in the preventative used against the spread of the leprosy; and every other means used by the authority of that legislative power to prevent infection, and preserve the health and constitution of that people: for however good and wholesome those laws were among the Jews, as every person who judges properly must certainly acknowledge, the providence of God is manifested in a greater degree in favour of that of inocula-

tion. For it is, in every respect, as great a duty for the legislative power in every nation, to appoint positive laws for preserving the health and constitution of the people, as it was for those of the Jews in taking care of their constitution. When the one is considered and compared with the other, it is hoped, it will certainly be not only a mean under God to cure the ignorance and prejudice of those who are the greatest enemies to inoculation, but will even reconcile such to the necessity and usefulness of the means appointed to prevent the death, not only of thousands, but even millions of children: many of which, if spared in life, would, no doubt, become most useful members to the state; therefore, richly deserve to be taken under the consideration of government.

Hence, all such parents as neglect the duty of inoculation to their children, are no less than enemies to their own offspring; for, as expresseth by Solomon, "He that spareth the rod hateth the child." Similar thereto, the parent that despiseth and neglecteth the duty of inoculation thereto, hateth the child more still: for though the rod is spared, and the child should go astray, wisdom, when grown up, may correct his folly; but if inoculation is neglected and the child dies, there is no recovery from death, or the grave where he is deposited.

From hence it follows, the utility that accrues from inoculation, is certainly beyond

all description. For instance, it is, in every respect, as much to the advantage of the patient to be inoculated with a good pock taken from off one of a wholesome constitution, as the ingrafting a bud or slip taken from off a good tree into a bad stock, is to the improvement of the fruit of said tree into which it was ingrafted. For the longer the natural pox remains in a place, the infection, by reason of the many bad constitutions infected therewith, certainly becomes still more and more putrid; and the more putrid, certainly the more dangerous to such as are infected therewith; and which, when properly considered, puts the difference betwixt that of the natural pox and those of inoculation certainly beyond all ground of doubt, or manner of dispute, however superstitiously people may argue in behalf of the natural, and against the truth of inoculation. As to the origin of this epidemical distemper, the small pox, it is what we know little or nothing of: for it has, no doubt, reigned in Asia and oriental countries, time out of remembrance. But thus far we know from history, that both the leprosy and small pox were imported into Europe, and are the returns and dismal effects of that enthusiastic expedition, called the Crusades, made into the holy land, and accomplished by Godfrey of Bullian, at the head of the christians, against the Turks nigh seven hundred years ago; because that the former, *viz.* the christians, through a blind and delusive superstition, imagined they had

a better right thereto than the latter, *viz.* the Turks.

Hence, the leprosy they have attempted to expel, and not without success; but that of the small pox is what they never have.

Lastly, And to conclude this subject, it is supposed by some, that many different complaints, troubles, or diseases, with which this nation was formerly unacquainted with, are sent thereon as a punishment for new sins invented by its inhabitants. But, in answer thereto, all new complaints, troubles, or diseases, not formerly incident to the inhabitants of this nation, are introduced either from change of living, or imported by commerce from various and distant climates, to which the constitution of the people who live therein are subject to, either from the nature of the country in which they live, or from the manner of that on which they live, and not as supposed in the above.

SKETCH V.

Of Lying and Evil Speaking; and of People Backbiting and making free with their Neighbour's Character.

THERE is a certain vice, *viz.* that of lying, than which, however little such as are guilty thereof may think of it, I know

no character more despicable: for even when they speak truth, no person dares believe or repeat it for truth; but is obliged to quote his authority, for fear, or rather to save his own character, lest he should be classed therewith, or made equal to him. It is in every one's power to hide himself from a thief, but from a liar it is not; therefore, the one is just all that more unsafe than the other. And also, all wilful and malicious lies are damned the same as other vices; and if not repented of, by turning unto God, will cleave fast to the author thereof at last; but this is what few thereof consider.

Hence, this vice is in reality so despicable and obnoxious to society, that nothing more needs to be expressed to its disapprobation or dislike. But I shall therefore just barely observe as follows.

A leper and one that is a liar are much on a par: for, as no person dares drink with the leper in the said cup, lest of his being infected and thereby smote with the same plague, in like manner, no person dares with safety repeat what is expressed by one who is deemed a liar, without quoting his authority, lest being false, he should thereby lose his own character, by rehearsing what he heard without quoting his authority. But, to proceed to that of evil-speaking.

Hence, there is another sore evil, though too little considered or thought of, which prevails among too, too many of mankind, and is as follows; *viz.* that of tearing in pieces one ano-

thers characters, when absent or behind their backs. Will such but consider if they themselves would wish to be so used in their own characters; they certainly would not,

Hence, do they not know that they who use such practices, that their characters, no doubt, are most liable, of all others, to be called in question, when they themselves are not present to answer. Hence, this advice I would therefore recommend to all such, that if they have nothing that is good to speak concerning others, when absent or behind their backs, that they say nothing that is evil, or what they themselves would wish that they would speak of them, who use such a cursed freedom in speaking to the hurt of others. The above custom is not only a great evil in such as give up themselves thereto, but is even a particular loss to such whose bread depends upon others. Nor is this all—No: for I tell you of a truth, that they who use such practices are not christians; therefore, not only a disgrace to the name, if they profess it, but to whatever society under heaven to whom they belong. But to proceed,

There is another fore evil, which prevails not only among the worthless, but even those who imagine themselves not the worst, but what they mean the first rate or best of christians (and they would take it very much amiss if one should tell them they are not), and is as follows, *viz.* the intermeddling with their neighbour's affairs, in matters of which they have no concern. But it is generally the case,

that such as are employed in this manner, are so much abroad, that, in a sense, they are scarce ever at home to consider those of their own. Nor is this all—No: for they are seldom if ever satisfied with less than taking away their neighbour's good name; and yet, after all, they have the presumption to call themselves christians. But further,

Though we should hear of ten thousand things to the hurt of our neighbour, we ought by no means to repeat them: for though what we have heard may be a fact, evil, no doubt, is soon enough when it comes to pass, though it be not accelerated. Let such persons, therefore, put themselves in his or their place of whom they so speak, and see, that if to their own loss they would wish that they should use the same freedom as to speak so of them. Will such but consider, that if concerned in their loss, *viz.* of those of whom they so speak, they certainly thereby hurt themselves in proclaiming it; and if not concerned, it is certainly a piece of great wickedness: for that which is against a person's welfare, disappoints him of his bread; which is murder in degree by him who is guilty thereof. Let every one, therefore, take care of his own character, rather than expose himself in speaking to the hurt of his neighbour's.

From hence, all they who give up themselves to that abominable practice of backbiting and speaking ill of others, do thereby give the world a just claim to speak of them as being guilty of such a cursed behaviour. But in

truth, they who are guilty thereof are not worth mentioning, if it be not in way of derision for their disgraceful practices.

From hence, all such, whether they believe it or not, are not only a disgrace, but an abomination, to both God and man. Whoever, therefore, backbite and speak evil of their neighbours, do thereby only expose themselves, and not those they speak against. Hence, it is, therefore, a disgrace for such who call themselves christians, to make free in ripping up their neighbours moral characters. But it is generally those that have most reason to be afraid of their own character, and have none to lose, that make free with the character of their neighbours. But they who are guilty of this sin, never see it in themselves, but still put it off their own score, and throw it upon some of their neighbours; but, as Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. But to proceed,

Nor is this evil circumscribed to what is here exprest in the above—No; it consists of various branches, much a-kin to the former, among whom are tale-bearers, namely, such who go about with an intention to raise their own characters at the expence of their neighbours. These are also, not only an abomination, but even a disgrace to the name christian, if they profess it; and not only the christian, but to every religion under heaven, if concerned therein. And to these I shall add as follows.

It is certainly a fore evil in those who take

the liberty to speak lightfully of others against whom they take the smallest offence; and they who use this custom in speaking lightfully of others when absent, either by names or otherwise, do thereby lay themselves, not only on a level, but even far below those of whom they speak lightfully of.

Hence, my advice is this, let each person speak no otherwise of others, than they themselves would wish to be spoken of by those of whom they take the advantage: for however short they come of this data, they do thereby debase themselves far below those against whom they speak. For instead of being esteemed by such as are present, to whom they express themselves, their words become obnoxious in the ears of every one that hears them.

Those who use the above custom, do thereby shew themselves, not only low, but even the least of mortals; therefore, of all others, the least worthy of being taken notice of; neither do they receive praise from any but fools, and the companions of fools. And as for people speaking of such as backbite, speak evil and lightfully of others, it would be paying such too great a compliment to make mention of them in the smallest respect. For instance, Would any person wish to take into his mouth that which is nauseous or loathsome, rotten and stinking? No, I apprehend not. In like manner, the names of such ought to be detested as unfavoury; and not only this, but time would be even lost if taken up in speaking of them: for an evil-speaker, a tale-

bearer, and the like, are not only an abomination, but even pests to society, and deserve to be marked with infamy as much as a thief: for you can hide from a thief, but an evil-speaker, a tale bearer, and the like, is from what no person can. Hence, a tale-bearer may, indeed, act from a pretence of friendship, on purpose to get into favour with such as they confer; but will soon become obnoxious, when once discovered. But further, and to proceed,

Whenever you hear people speak ill of others, you may be fully assured that they, in your absence, on turning your back, will use the same freedom with you who are present: for such people who deal, as in the above, in bringing one fraught, always want to return with another. For such persons are only the devil's pack-horse, who never wish to go empty, without a return. And to proceed,

I have known some people, who could neither take care, nor yet manage their own affairs or business, and yet, of all others, the most severe in censuring and speaking thereon against their neighbours. But, let such first begin at home, and learn to improve themselves and their own affairs, and then they will know how to improve and speak of their neighbours. Let them first, as observed by Jesus Christ, "Cast the beam out of their own eye, and then they will see clearly how to cast the mote out of their brother's," or neighbour's, "eye."

Hence, it is a most pitiful character indeed, for one to rip up his neighbour's sores. Let him rather, like the good Samaritan, pour oil thereinto for his recovery. Similar to which, a man who wishes to improve his neighbour, tells him his fault betwixt him and him alone, in order that he may be sensible thereof and forsake it, and not before his neighbours. And by such a method, he has a chance to cultivate, and thereby save his neighbour or friend, in that of which he was not aware. But to this I shall add as follows.

Instead of vying to increase our substance, and raise our own characters upon and at the expence of our neighbours, as too many do, let us rather do good thereto, and strive to out-do them in acts of kindness, *viz.* of justice, goodness, and mercy, and in forgiving one another. And when others speak evil of us, let us always strive to speak good of them, as far as justice can possibly admit; and in so doing, we will thereby imitate our heavenly Father, and become more and more the children of the true and ever blessed God.

If people would act as in the above, it would make one another happy; and thereby induce God to bless society, and dwell with us, and we with him. And that this is no vain hypothesis, is evident from what follows. For which, see Matth. vii. 12. "Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." I shall therefore observe the following comment. Christ

took the occasion from thence, to ingraft upon the internal feelings of the human mind, the noblest precept of morality that ever was delivered by any teacher, *viz.* that of doing to others as we would wish to be done by. The full meaning of this verse seems to be as follows.

“In all your dealings with mankind, look inwardly, and consider how you would be affected by the doing or not doing of those things by others to you, which you are about to do or not to do to them. Consult your own hearts, and do that to others, which you find, from the examination of your own hearts, you, with reason, would expect from them, if they were in your situation and you in theirs. You may, by this unerring rule, know how to act in all circumstances. How clear a rule of duty is this, and how easily applicable to practise? Let us ask our hearts, should we like to be calumniated, cheated, deceived, or injured? the answer will be, no. Does not this tell us, that we are not to calumniate, cheat, deceive, or in any shape injure others? When we are in want or necessity of any kind, do we not wish for the hands of others to be stretched out to our relief? Do we not think that a spirit of benevolence should actuate them in our favour, as their fellow-creature? And does not this declare to us, that we are to stretch out our hands to all our fellow-creatures in necessity? When we err, do we not rather chuse to be reprov'd in the spirit of meekness, than with severity and the fury of

anger? Does not this tell us, that we should reprove those who offend us with mildness, and not let the fury of anger rise against them? Do we not like to be dealt honourably by? And does not this tell us, that we ought to act with honour in all our dealings with, and towards others? Thus, by the feeling of our own hearts, we may learn, in every case, how to behave towards others. The rules of our duty are not in heaven, that we should say, Who will go and bring them down to us? but they are written within ourselves; and our divine instructor, Jesus, has taught us to regard and read them, in directing us to this one general rule, that "Whatsoever we would that men should do unto us," if we were in their place and they in our's, that is, whatever we would wish, and, with reason, expect to have done by them to us in such case whatever, we should think equitable with regard to ourselves, "even so to do to them." Further,

"For this is the law and the prophets;" that is, this is that great rule, wherein is contained our whole duty towards our neighbour and to ourselves, as taught by the law and the prophets. This precept is of the same import with that other, where it is exprest, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." In which precept, the apostle Paul says, "All the law is fulfilled." Gal. v. 14. "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." And also, Rom. xiii. 8. "Owe no man any thing,

“but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.”

Hence, O that men were wise, and would but see what happiness accrues from doing good to one another! In short, every action which we have in our power, and do not neglect to perform it (not meaning thereby to hurt ourselves). In a word, the reflection thereof is, in every respect, as refreshful to the human soul, as the rising sun is to the vegetable creation. But this happiness is what none can possibly partake of, but only they who experience it, by putting the same in practice. Hence, and to proceed,

The satisfaction that accrues from virtue, in doing to others in all things as we wish they would do unto us, rewards, and is more (if people but knew it) than what pays itself. But alas! I wish that too many be not too ignorant of this happiness, so as to partake of it.

From hence, man by no means needs go abroad to enquire at others for this instruction—No; but let him only repair home to his own breast, and there he will certainly find it: and the opposite will for certain, if not unfeignedly repented of, kindle a flame therein, one day or other, never to be quenched, as to give rest, peace, or ease thereto. But to proceed,

Hence, if men but knew what happiness accrues from doing good to others, they would certainly practise it, and enjoy the experience thereof: for the reflection of every good action on the human mind, is not only equivalent,

but repays itself, and more to him that is master of it. What is here exprest, is an undeniable truth, if men, from experience, but knew and were judges thereof: for the satisfaction that accrues from a good action done in behalf of our fellow creature, is more than what can properly be exprest by the human mind: for the happiness that ariseth therefrom is actually divine. But to this I shall add in corroboration thereof, and is as follows.

Mat. xi. and three last verses thereof, verse 28. "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." What is here exprest, when properly considered with the context, seems to have been spoke of the Jews groaning under a yoke of burdensome rites and ceremonies, which they were unable to bear, as St. Paul declares, Acts xv. 10.; such as going up from the remotest parts of Judea unto Jerusaleme thrice a year, and there to fulfil a round of expensive ceremonies, with other like grievous commands. Verse 29. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me," embrace and be obedient to the religion I propose, and become my disciples; "for I am meek and lowly in heart:" I am of a condescending disposition, even to the meanest, and shall not be severe with you in what I require of you in obtaining the favour of God; nor do I impose any unnecessary burdens upon you for that purpose, like those who pike themselves in lording over

your consciences—No: you need not be in fear from a consciousness of your sins; for I am not like those proud, supercilious, harsh, and superstitious men, you have been under.

It is to be remarked, that the doctors of the Jewish law, especially those of the sacerdotal race, *viz.* the consecrated gentlemen, were neither meek nor lowly, but cruel exactors of those burdensome tithes, such as were commanded in their law; and were also proud of having the common people of the Jews in subjection to them: but there is nothing of this nature in Christ, who requires only a good life, and condescends to the very meanest, whoever they be. But I would to God, that the pride of priests had been circumscribed to that consecrated band in the Jewish nation, and had died with them; but alas! this is what it has not: for it has even diffused itself into the christian world, contrary to what Christ hath commanded. Verse 30. "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light;" for my religion is easy, and my commandments are light to be born.

It is then no small matter, but a blessing greater than what we are able to conceive, that by the religion of Christ, the worshippers of the true God are freed from the bondage of the Mosaic institution, and all such laws pregnant with so many idle and superstitious trifles, rites, and ceremonies, consisting of purifications and journies to Jerusalem from all parts, and was indeed a burden grievous to be born:

for it rendered even life itself troublesome, without being greatly profited by them. For they were precepts or statutes, according to what the prophet Ezekiel says, which were not good in their nature.

Now, is it possible that such statutes, which we are expressly told by the prophet were not good, could either be given or appointed by God? No, not possible: for if not good, they could never therefore come from a good being, but from an evil; because, as God is infinitely good, they could not therefore possibly be from him. But blessed be God, who, through Christ, has given us a religion which is good and profitable in its nature, and advantageous to us in the highest degree. The precepts of Christ are such in their nature, as are quite suited and calculated to make us happy; being nothing but love and charity. Our duty is all comprised in loving God and men; so that, he who lives according to Christ's rules, leads a sweeter life than he who gives himself up to his vicious passions: for they bear grievous burdens, who are slaves to avarice, ambition, lust, prejudice, envy, backbiting, evil-speaking, tale-bearing, superstition, or any other vice not mentioned.

Hence, What is it that Christ requires and exacts of us? Only, that which is for our good, both in this world, and that which is to come. What does he command to be performed by us, but fidelity, charity, humility, sobriety, mercy, holiness? All which do not

burden us, but adorn us. The obedience which he requires of us, is such a reasonable service, as every good mind must rejoice in, and must needs approve; nor can objections be made to them, but from the dictates of a heart that is corrupt. The yoke of Christ is generally profitable as to this life, and always so in that which is to come. Hence, it makes men well pleasing to God, and confers eternal happiness upon them; and it is light and easy to be borne, on account of the assistance which is given of the Holy Spirit, and the greatness and certainty of the proposed reward, *viz.* eternal happiness. But to proceed,

I shall add further, to that which is express in the foregoing, 1 John v. 3: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." Hence, what God considers as the love of him, is the keeping of his commandments. "And his commandments are not grievous," not expensive or hard to be obeyed, like that of the Mosaic law—No. We might justly complain, if any one impossible command was proposed under pain of damnation, or as the condition of our obtaining everlasting life. Such commands would, indeed, be very grievous; but in the gospel there are no such commands. All the commandments of Christ ought to be understood in no other sense, than as practicable by us, provided we exercise proper care and diligence, for he never intended them in any other sense.

St. John knew very well, that the notion of God's commands being impossible, or grievous and burdensome, tended to discourage men from attempting to keep them; and therefore would be of very bad consequence. For that reason, after speaking of keeping the commandments, he added, "And his commands are not grievous." But further,

In corroboration with some of the former vices taken notice of in the foregoing, there is another evil, *viz.* that of envying the prosperity of our neighbours, which, if not excessively ignorant, they would certainly know, that the welfare and prosperity of our neighbours, is actually the increase of our own: for the richer and greater affluence which they are possessed of among whom we live, the more still in whatever branch of business we profess, will certainly redound therefrom to us. For where nothing is nor to spare, nothing is to be got. And besides all this, the envying the prosperity of our neighbour is a very heinous sin.

Having proceeded thus far, I shall therefore conclude with what may justly be observed and drawn from the following text, when properly considered, Chap. iv. 21. "And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also." From what is here exprest concerning the love of God in said chapter, and of our dwelling in love, in loving not only God, but our brother also, we may infer, that we, his rational creatures, best shew and manifest our love to

God, and are even most pleasing to him, by having a most benevolent, humane, and loving disposition towards all; and by using our utmost endeavours to be useful to our fellow creatures, by the exercise of justice, truth, and benevolence, rather than contending for opinions, or retiring from the converse of men; or even fasting, praying, hearing of sermons, and frequenting religious societies without being really useful to the community in which we live.

From hence, it necessarily follows, that the love of God, and our love to him, does not consist in being circumscribed to a party, but is general towards all. Too many falsely imagine they can love God, and at the same time hate and bear prejudice against their neighbour, and speak evil of him; but I tell them of a truth, that such a belief is a downright delusion, even a loving the devil in place of God: for the love of God, and of those who really love him, is extended in doing good to all without exception.

From hence, it is not the forming of convents, and cloistering up mankind into religious societies, like those of the Roman Catholics, that will make them christians—No: for Christ tells us expressly, Matth. vii. 21. “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” And adds, Verse 22. “Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord,

“ Have we not prophesied in thy name, and
“ in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy
“ name have done many wonderful works ?”
But see what follows, Christ tells them, saying,
Verse 23. “ And then will I profess unto them,
“ I never knew you; Depart from me, ye that
“ work iniquity.” From this it is evident,
it is not the forming and cloistering up people
into religious societies, like those of Roman
Catholics, as observed in the above, that will
make them christians—No: for Christ saith
expressly, it is not him that saith, but he a-
lone that doth the will of God, that shall en-
ter into the kingdom of heaven. We see here,
that though they had even come the length
as to cast out devils, and do many wonderful
works, yet Christ tells them, He never knew
them; and orders them to depart from his pre-
sence as workers of iniquity.

Lastly, it is, therefore, now evident from
the above text, that neither the forming of
convents, *viz.* the cloistering of men into reli-
gious or praying societies, and hunting after
sermons, that will make them acceptable to, or
in the sight of God—No: but we, in order to
obtain his favour, must forsake every kind of
vice; and not only cease from speaking evil
of others, but we must be merciful, love, and
do good to all, in such a manner as we would
wish they would do to us, or be done by;
without which (or an unfeigned repentance
on our coming short thereof) we can never
possibly be accepted of him. But in short,
men would fast, they would pray, they would

hear sermons, they will frequent religious societies, in a word, they would even do every thing to gain the favour of God, but that which would actually obtain it. But our complying with what God requires in the above, as exprest by Jesus Christ, is positively, above all others, the greatest service we can possibly do to please and obtain God's favour, in order that we may therefore be accepted of him. But the real difference betwixt the form and power of Godliness, is as follows. The one regardeth the moralities of the gospel (or duties therein contained) merely as a set task; but the other, with pleasure and delight, as being the happiness of his very soul.

But to conclude; one thing further remains, which, if properly understood, deserves our attention, and is as follows. If such who delight in expending their money in excess of drunkenness, and thereby do not only expose themselves in different respects, but also waste their constitutions by a vice which generally becomes its own punisher (such as headaches and the like, with other severe fits of sickness they wilfully bring upon themselves through their own folly), if such, I say, in their leisure hours, would but consider the pinching wants and necessities of persons and families, who, from perhaps age, want of health, badness of trade, misfortunes, a numerous family, or the like to support, after having sufficiently refreshed themselves, would take that wherewith they go to excess and give to the relief of such as are exprest in the above, they, instead

of bringing upon themselves headaches and remorse, would thereby make themselves happy in relieving the straitened circumstances and necessities of those who have it not in their power to help and relieve themselves: this, no doubt, would be to exchange their misery for happiness; and instead of cutting life short, would thereby prolong it.

SKETCH VI.

Of Reason being an unprofitable Guide to direct us to obey and do the Will of God in what they call Matters of Religion.

THE Miser and he that despiseth reason are alike. As with the one, so does it fare with the other: for the beggar who travel-
leth all day for alms, and enjoys the use of what he hath gathered, is happier in his lodgings at night, than the miser with all his bags of gold. Similar thereto, he who hath no other education than only the language of his own country, and enjoys the freedom thereof, is incomparably above a man of letters, though the greatest linguist in the world, if shut up under an enthusiastic superstition: for neither colleges nor academies can possibly give sound wisdom, or a just knowledge of the truth, if deprived of that rational freedom, by being shut up as in the above. I know indeed, some people most ignorantly boast of the languages

giving knowledge, and being the key thereof; but if this were true, as vainly imagined by some, none of mankind could possibly be more knowing than Roman Catholics: for no people are generally more learned than they. But true knowledge is not circumscribed to the languages, as vainly imagined by some—No; but is free to all who have the power and desire to make a proper use of what they have received from God.

Further, How often have I heard these antirational, or what we may call bedlam teachers, the professors of superstition, who are advocates for the devil, vilify and declaim against reason, which is the unspeakable gift of heaven, implanted by God himself in the human breast? If they themselves, *viz.* these bedlamites, had acquired that most noble and divine talent independent of God, then might they use such cursed freedom with it: but this is not the case; for they only abuse it, by reason of its testifying against them, and he whose servants they are. Yet though God, as in the above, is the author of reason, the improvement of that divine talent is ours; and he that improves and applies himself to the use and improvement thereof, has the promise of that twofold blessing set before us by Jesus Christ in the gospel. But he who cries down, despises, and sets at naught reason, is similar to him, who, to get rid thereof, took his lord's money and hid it in the earth, or like the other who laid it up in a napkin: this they did, in order that they might thereby get rid of the improve-

ment required of them. But listen, ye despisers, to the sentence pronounced against them, "Take ye the wicked and unprofitable servants, and cast them into utter darkness, there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth."

From hence, it follows, it is therefore now evident, from the above, that they who vilify and decry reason, are thereby the devil's best friends; and they that are friends to the devil are certainly enemies to both God and man. But to proceed,

The law of reason and religion of nature, which is so much despised and set at naught by antirational priests, is from heaven and the gift of God; but though these sublime and heavenly gifts be from God, the improvement, as observed, or not improvement thereof, is ours. And for us to reject and exclaim against reason as not to be trusted to judge and direct us in matters of religion, or what they call articles of faith, is, in express words, to lay ourselves open to all manner of delusions, and thereby to allow ourselves to be carried away of the same, as with an overflowing flood.

Hence, however astonishing it may appear at first view, it is no great wonder though such priests, who propagate and patronize doctrines wherein the moral attributes of God are represented as to contradict and thereby confound each other, decry and exclaim against reason, as corrupt and altogether depraved; therefore, not to be trusted to in matters of religion, or what they call articles of faith, where-

in God is represented as in the above. But such priests may very justly be compared to the fool, or rather practical Atheists, who say, by reason of their testifying against their vices, or rather wish in their heart, that there was no God to judge and condemn them for their evil actions. Hence, as in the one, so does it exactly fare in the other: for though reason or conscience testify against such priests who decry and exclaim against her, *viz.* reason, they, like the Atheist in wishing there was no God to punish them for their iniquities, only wish there was no such thing as reason to discover, detect, and testify against such doctrines wherein God is represented by them in such an odious and obnoxious light, as thereby to act, contradict, and confound himself. But as reason is the express gift of heaven, to believe that God either acts contrary thereto, or requires of man (possessed of that divine faculty) to believe in any one thing having come from or being given by him, contrary to said faculty set up and established by God in the human breast, is, in express words, to believe in the devil and not in God, or rather in place of him. Therefore, to exclaim against reason, is to exclaim against God: for no person can possibly exclaim or reflect against either of these powers of which we are endued by nature, but thereby actually accuseth God, the alone author thereof, from whom we receive them. But to proceed,

One thing further I cannot but remark, that

those who decry reason, morality, or what they call good works, as of no worth or value in the sight of God, are the very persons who imagine they can scale heaven by works (independent of the above, namely the duties of the gospel), *viz.* by their prayers, their fasting like the Jews of old and Roman Catholics, independent of the foregoing, *viz.* the duties of the gospel, which is the positive way to life, as taught therein by Jesus Christ.

Hence, when I look on those pitiful objects, namely, such as never were possessed of reason, and others deprived thereof, I cannot, therefore, but be astonished at those despicable wretches who cry down reason by depreciating it. In short, I am even at a loss in what light to describe them, or by what names to apply thereto, in distinguishing them from the rest of the human race. Lastly, I shall add as follows.

Christ tells us, Matth. v. 18. "That one jot or one tittle should by no means fail or pass from the law, till all was fulfilled." Now, if one jot or one tittle should by no means fail or pass from the law, in what light can those teachers (who cry down morality, or the validity of moral duties taught by Jesus Christ as unprofitable) appear in the sight of God, by accusing others (who preach up the duties or morality of the New Testament), saying, that they are leading men down to the chambers of death? Such teachers, whatever people may think thereof, are not only ministers of darkness by contemning Christ's gospel, but apos-

tles of the devil. Of which we may observe (mark this), that it is no great wonder though such priests (or clouds of darkness), and their constituents, decry and declaim against reason or rational powers; for when once this divine ray (*viz.* reason), which proceeds from the Deity alone, is stifled and put out, they can with impunity make not only the least, but even the grossest falsehoods pass for divine truth.

Hence, it is reported, that not only the prayers, but also the ploughing of the wicked is sin; and likewise, that the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination unto God, and as smoke in his nostrils. If the prayers of such be an abomination, as in the above, the prayer of the superstitious hypocrite, who decries and exclaims against reason, the duties and moralities of the gospel taught by Jesus Christ and his apostles, must, no doubt, be a greater abomination still: for no person can possibly be greater enemies thereto than they.

Now, for people to rely on whatever they are required to believe in by their priest, is to take their religion upon hearsay, and not upon evidence; and by rejecting that which actually comes from God, *viz.* reason (given to direct them in things agreeable to his will, not contrary, but conformable to the moral attributes of God), thereby confidently believe in going to heaven upon hearsay independent of gospel duties. But these and other doctrines of like nature may well harden peo-

ple in their vices, but can never possibly reform their practice, improve their morals, nor influence their lives.

Hence, one thing further I cannot but remark; in short, Jesus Christ appears to have been the greatest moralist that ever existed; but such as defame and explode morality, *viz.* gospel-duties, or what they call good works, positively required of us as unprofitable in the sight of God, do thereby endeavour and exert themselves to bring Christ, the Author appointed by the Deity in the publishing thereof, to perpetual disgrace. But with respect to reason, can we, as express by a certain author, lay too much stress on reason, when we consider it is only by virtue of it, that God can hold communion with man.

From hence, let us not reject, but give place to that divine faculty bestowed on us of God: for to debar reason from enquiring into matters of religion, is to give place to error, falsehood, and deceit. And if reason, which is the voice of God, must be silent and dares not utter her voice, nor be heard to judge in that wherein our eternal interest is concerned, it is easy to perceive the dreadful consequences that will attend such at last: for to discharge reason from acting as in the above, is, in express words, to banish God whose voice it is and province to judge and be concerned therein. But though rejected, he will be the awful and impartial judge, to take vengeance on her adversaries, by whom she has been despis-

ed and fet at naught. But further, and to conclude, I shall therefore observe as follows.

So long as I admitted of the priest to keep the key of my understanding in his pocket (which I acknowledge was indeed by far too long), I was obliged to take my knowledge from him, and to believe in such a manner as he required and was pleased to direct me, the same as all of you who implicitly submit to the opinion of the priest at present do; but since I obliged him to give up, and reserved to myself that which he formerly kept, I no longer submit, but now believe conformable to the law and religion of nature, which is the gospel of God republished and taught by Jesus Christ, for the good and salvation of men. But this I heartily acknowledge, it is indeed a common saying with too many of mankind, Who, say they, should keep the key of my knowledge but the priest? But, in answer to which, one thing I would ask, and is as follows. Would you give him, *viz.* the priest, the keys of all your bills, your bonds, your cash, *viz.* your gold and silver, and all your other treasure, without ever so much as taking an account or estimate of what you had committed unto his trust, that you might again call for it at pleasure? This, I apprehend, you would not. If you, therefore, will not trust him, *viz.* the priest, with the temporary effects of this world, which endure but as for a moment (without taking an account thereof), far less (or else you are just all that the greater fools) with that which is

eternal; and if lost, can never possibly be recalled.

But further, I shall beg leave to add as follows, as remarked by a certain author in speaking of lies. "The priests of every religion (but ours, *viz.* such as conform therein with the moral attributes of God; but all claim this, though in fact what they tenaciously hold contrary to the above test denies it) live upon the ignorance of the laity, by inventing oracles, miracles, prodigies, mysteries, sacrifices, holy water, holy cakes, and the like. By these inventions, they grow rich and powerful, and make great gain of what they call the word of God. They persuade you that these things are a part of true religion, when, according to the dictates of reason and nature (and very often too of their own hearts), nothing can possibly be more opposite thereto. By which procedure, the pure religion of nature, republished by Jesus Christ, is locked up in impenetrable darkness, and the priests keep the key. It is blended with mysteries which they explain in such a manner as best suits their interests; and the whole must be swallowed together, or it will not take off the taint of original sin, and save us from eternal damnation. Thus do the priests lie to the laity. These are what they call pious frauds; and what mankind are taught to believe innocent. These religious lies are doubtless very common among all denominations.

SKETCH VII.

*An incontestable Evidence, whereby we may know,
and thereby prevent our being Deceived in mat-
ters of Religion.*

WE must first, as observed by a celebrated author, lay down the following maxim, that our reason, which is a gift that God has bestowed upon us for our conduct, cannot possibly deceive us in things that it sees distinctly, without interruption, and self evidently; for if this discerning and heaven-born faculty of framing ideas deceives us, God himself would therefore be a deceiver, by representing falsehood to us under the colour or appearance of truth.

From hence, our reason would, therefore, be no longer of any service to us; for instead of being a blessing or of use to us, it would, in express words, be a pernicious gift, tending rather to lead us astray than conduct us aright. Hence, if this unerrable and heaven-appointed guide, *viz.* reason, should mislead us in things that are evident, plain, and easy, God would therefore deceive us; which, as God being the unerring and unchangeable truth itself, cannot therefore possibly be maintained, without charging him with arrant falsehood, error, and deceit. Conformable to said test, is that most glorious and sublime system of

moral duties taught by Jesus Christ. For instance, Christ requires a belief in no one thing necessary to salvation, that is contrary, but conformable, to reason; but priests, like themselves, or rather the devil, anathematize and pronounce volleys of inevitable damnation (which is the sure mark of the beast) against every soul of man, that rejects and will not receive as infallible and divine truth, every particular prodigy of the Mosaic system, *viz.* Judaism, with whatever other corruptions they have ingrafted on the gospel taught by Jesus Christ. But to proceed,

Conformable to the above system of truth, Jesus Christ proves his doctrines by reason, saying, "Blessed are all they who hear, see, and understand these things and do them." But priests bless them who believe things contrary to reason, and which can never possibly be understood thereby; and on the other hand, send to hell in legions every soul of man, who, because impossible to be comprehended by reason, refuse and therefore will not believe them. Further, and to proceed,

Christ always calls up reason as the great incontestable proof, and unbiaſſed evidence of what he requires of us to believe; but priests order reason to begone, that people may believe contrary thereto. Truth delights to be attended by reason; but falsehood, error, and deceit, because contrary to reason, evades and will by no means admit thereof.

Hence, reason and gospel duties being twins of a heavenly birth and from above, attend

upon one another as inseparable; but that which is of priests, *viz.* error, falsehood, and deceit, being from beneath, will admit of neither. In short, high and low, fire and frost, light and darkness, are no more opposite to one another, than what the doctrines of Jesus Christ and those of priests are distinct from, and contrary or opposite to one another. So that no person, if not a mere fanatic, a buffoon, or what not, can possibly believe or give credit thereto, but for the amusement of fools.

To conclude this Sketch; the great loss is, the pure and unadulterated gospel or religion of Jesus Christ, when alone, is what will by no means bring much or great gain to the priests, independent of the various corruptions ingrafted thereon by self-interested and designing men, whose interest lies in keeping the world in ignorance, or rather in gross darkness.

Lastly, I shall just barely observe and add as follows. The way to heaven by Jesus Christ, Matth. vii. is morality or gospel duties, verse 12. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." But Christ, by knowing what an aversion both the priests and people have thereto in what he thus taught, calls it the strait gate, saying, verses 13, 14. "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which

“ go in thereat : because strait is the gate and
“ narrow is the way which leadeth unto life,
“ and few there be that find it.” Priests being therefore extremely sensible of the above truth exprest by Christ, in order to evade this difficult passage to heaven, have, by virtue of their priestly sagacity, deep learning, and penetration, discovered a most near and wonderful passage thereunto by faith and believing, altogether independent of morality or gospel duties.

Further, and instead, like Frenchmen, of transporting people from earth to heaven only in baskets, as the prophets of old, or in basketfuls, by virtue of that new invented aerostatical (but expensive) machine, *viz.* air balloons, one priest, by virtue of this balloon doctrine, *viz.* faith independent of gospel duties, will transport a whole church of ten or twelve hundred, or even thousands of people, thither at once (but all in the broad, not the strait way to heaven), and at no higher expence, than upon mere believing independent of morality, *viz.* the strait gate of gospel duties, positively taught and required of us by Jesus Christ, as in the above.

SKETCH VIII.

Of the Passions, and abuse thereof.

ALL our different passions we possess are appointed us of God, not to our hurt, as vainly imagined by some, but for the best of purposes: for the whole of our faculties, passions, and what not, of which human nature is possessed, is the gift of God bestowed on us for our good; and it is only the excess or abuse thereof, by which they become a sin. Pride, for instance, against which so many most ignorantly exclaim, when kept in its proper place, is one of the most noble passions and ornaments of human life: for it is, no doubt, given to us, in order to prevent our being guilty of any thing that is either low, dirty, mean, or unbecoming amongst men, on purpose that we may be aware against every thing that is ungrateful, ungenerous, or disgraceful to human nature.

Further, if man was not endued with passions, he could not be a probationer; and without affection, nothing could possibly induce us to either good or evil; therefore, without which, we could neither be rewarded for doing good, nor punished for doing that which is evil. But to proceed,

Since these passions are the gift of God, e-

very one of which ought therefore to be kept in its proper place, in order that it may act its proper function. And since the gift of heaven, and put under the government of the rational powers, they ought neither to be too much indulged, nor used harshly: for all are appointed us as servants; therefore, are to be used in such a manner as not to be abused. And to proceed,

If a man has servants, if he either indulge them too much, or use them harshly, he himself will be the first that will suffer and bear the loss. If a servant is bad or careless in performing his duty, the more attention is necessary to be paid thereto; and if good, the less will be required: for it is by a man's servants, and the degree of attention he pays thereto, that he shall either stand or fall.

The will and appointment of God is, that man should be happy while in life, and also in that which is to come; and the unerring rule established by God for that very purpose is as follows. That each of these powers wherewith man is endued, *viz.* both animal and rational, should act their proper function in such a manner, as not to be hurtful, but in conjunction for the real benefit and good of each other, both for this life, and with respect to that which is to come. And if we shall chance to fall short in that which is appointed for our good, that we unfeignedly repent thereof and turn unto God, and he will graciously forgive, and receive us into favour with him. Without which, as in the above,

there is no solid or real happiness to be obtained or found for man. And if he act as in the foregoing, he cannot possibly misgive: for true and undefiled religion is not what the world imagines—No. For there is no other religion acceptable in the sight of God, but purely that which is diffused through all our actions, and descends to others as well as to ourselves: for it is not the name that makes the christian, but the life.

Hence, thousands who never heard of the gospel, who, through a nearer conformity of life thereto, are incomparably greater christians, than thousands and ten thousands who have had the assurance to suppose and call themselves Christ's best friends. Further, and to proceed,

Every person ought to use their servants in such a manner as they themselves would wish to be used by others, or in such a manner as they would wish that they who are servants would use them, if in their place. And also, the servant ought to use the master in such a manner as he would wish the master should use him, if the master was his servant. Every one, whether servant or master, ought to use another in such a manner as they would wish to be done by.

Further, the next thing to be observed, is that of husband and wife; each thereof ought to bear with one another's foibles and infirmities, as far as possible. The husband ought by no means to lord too much over the wife, nor the wife over the husband, lest either in

so doing discourage another, and thereby give a bad example to both servants and children, who, by making a bad use thereof, may turn out to the loss of the whole. Neither ought parents to use their children harshly, but with mildness, lest they also be discouraged, to the loss of both parents and children. Lastly, children are the gift of God; therefore, since parents receive their children from God, they ought to take care thereof, and use them in remembrance of him from whom they receive them. But to proceed,

Who would be so ungrateful as not to acquaint their offspring (which is the gift of heaven) with whatever may redound to their good, either in this life, or in that which is to come? And also, they ought to instil into their minds just and proper conceptions of God, not contrary, but conformable to his moral attributes, with a hearty submission to his divine will, by acting with obedience, conformable to whatever he hath required and set before us in the gospel taught by Jesus Christ and his apostles. The above is no more than what we positively owe thereto, with a just return of gratitude to God from whom we received them. For it is abundantly evident from the gospel, that he who received the one talent and did not improve it, it was taken from him and given unto another, and he himself punished upon the account of his neglect. Similar to which parable are they who receive not only one, but a number of children from God, and neglect to bring them

up in the knowledge of him from whom they received them: the one is, in every respect, just as punishable as the other, *viz.* he who took and hid his lord's money, and did not improve the talent which he had received. And besides all this, God sometimes, on the neglect of improving these gifts, either removes the children by death, or leaves them to become hurtful not only to themselves, but even to their ungrateful parents, as a punishment for their neglect: for whatever is inculcated upon the minds of children by their parents in their childhood or youth, generally becomes an inherent principle in their natures, thro' the remaining part of their life or riper years.

To conclude, I shall therefore add the following observation. There is not so much as one draught of breath with which we are supplied in this life, but what is actually given and received by us from God; but it is to be remarked, that God, in sending us into the world, does thereby certainly give us a right and title to all the privileges therein contained. Yet, though, as in the above, we are bound by nature to make a lawful and proper use of all thereof as being received from him, *viz.* God, we are not only indebted to him for our beings, our health, our strength, and supplies of life, for whatever we receive either of raiment, of meat, or of drink; and not only this, but are, in every respect, as much indebted for the use and discharge thereof when nature requires it (without which, dissolution

would immediately ensue), as if we had not received it.

Hence, I repeat it again, I cannot therefore but observe, how that it has been recommended to us to acknowledge God in all we receive, especially in what we eat and drink; but I tell you further, that we are, in every respect, just as much indebted to God for a free discharge of both after no longer useful to us, without which discharge, we could just as little subsist as on the want thereof: for the effect of the one would, in every respect, produce just as certain death as the other.

SKETCH IX.

Of the Rise and Fall of States, and the Causes thereof.

THE rise and fall of a state depends much upon the nature of its government, and the management thereof. When the Romans made their conquests, they prudently lessened the taxes of the people to their encouragement; but when arrived at a state of luxury, they increased them not only to the hurt of the people, or subjects of their empire, but to their own also at last.

It is therefore, I apprehend, obvious from the above, that taxes are the only particular whereby a state is either increased or diminished. When the taxes are easy, the people are

encouraged to marry to the increase of the state; but when the taxes become heavy, marriage and propagation are thereby discouraged apace, to the depopulation and loss of the state. And not only this, but heavy taxes not only oppress, but thereby squeeze out the inhabitants to the weakening of the state; by which it becomes exposed to the advantage of its enemies; and too often, on account thereof, falls a prey to its neighbours. The above has not only been the case, but has been the fate of many of both states, kingdoms, and also monarchies and empires, before this period. And that this is no vain hypothesis, whoever is acquainted with history will certainly know the truth of the above, that such has no doubt been the case, which leaves little or no doubt of its being the same again: for what is already past, the like may again take place.

But to conclude, of taxes being the cause as in the above, witness Solomon, of whom it is reported of his being possessed and blessed not only with a flourishing kingdom, but with affluence of immense riches, which he amassed together, *viz.* many talents of both silver and gold; but mark this, whoever will be pleased with an impartial view of that history, will easily find, that Solomon only attained to such an opulent fortune, by his oppressing the people in levying of heavy taxes in burdening the state with more than it was able to bear; as appears evident from the reply made by that people to Rehoboam, Solomon's son,

whom he appointed to succeed him in the office of his kingly government. Thus Solomon departed altogether from the command of Moses when they should appoint a king over them, Deut. xvii. 17. "Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold." All of which, *viz.* both women and riches, and also horses prohibited in the above sixteenth verse, he increased to excess, without respect to Moses' institution: for we are told (instead of having only ten wives, like his father David) he had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. If the above seraglio be a proof of Solomon's great wisdom, of which we are told and is so much boasted of, he, no doubt, had his share thereof above many others of whom we have any account. And as to horses which were expressly prohibited by Moses, he is said to have increased for his own use, contrary to Moses' command, to the number of forty thousand. But to return to Rehoboam.

For which, see 1 Kings xii. 4. "Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee." But Rehoboam, instead of complying with the people's request, told them roughly, saying. "My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins, and I will add to your yoke; and instead of whips I will chastise you with scorpions." And the people, in answer to Reho-

boam's haughty reply, told him, saying, verse 16. "So that when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: To your tents, O Israel." Thus, by virtue of Solomon's heavy and oppressive burdens, and the haughty reply of a foolish prince, it cost him the loss of almost his whole kingdom, *viz.* the revolt of the ten tribes, which never returned to the house or government of Judah.

It is therefore obvious, from what is here exprest in the foregoing by the ten tribes to Rehoboam, in requiring him to remove the grievous yoke or oppressive taxes by which they were borne down, that if he had complied with their request, they had never departed from his sceptre; and that his refusing to remove the heavy burdens, and in threatening to add more thereunto, was the cause of their revolt, to the depopulation of the state; and that, by weakening of which, it became a prey to its enemies. As in the above, so has it fared with almost all nations in following their example. But to proceed,

The difference betwixt the rise and fall of states, may be compared to the different seasons of the year. In the spring, the whole vegetable creation begins to bud, and sends forth its blossoms, leaves, and rich verdure, with a most fragrant, odoriferous, and de-

lightful smell. The appearance of every bush and flower is what delights the eye, cheers the mind, and yields happiness to every spectator or beholder thereof: for the very smallest of birds are refreshed, by beholding, and in partaking of the blessed aspect thereof, with delight. But in autumn, the blossoms are fled, the leaves wither and fall from every tree, and every branch is thereby deserted of its clothing, luster, and rich ornaments, with which it was garnished. Similar thereto does it fare with nations; they have their spring, their summer, their autumn, and their winter. In the rise of states, sciences, trade, and every thing increase more and more, to the happiness and advantage of the inhabitants thereof; but in their decline, both science, trade, and commerce of every kind, like the leaves, wither, decay, and fall away, to the irreparable loss, grief, and sorrow of the subjects.

SKETCH X.

Of Polygamy.

THE subject of Polygamy, like many others, is what has been much disputed on both sides; some in its favours, and some against it. As the strength of a nation lies in the number of the people, some have therefore alledged, that polygamy is the most effectual means for that purpose; supposing that upon

having more wives than one, it must, no doubt, add to the increase of the people. Others again alledge, that this can never be the case; and the reason why (which is not without plausibility) there are nearly the same number of males as of females born into the world, which is only a woman to each man; therefore, if one man have two wives, a second must therefore live single, as no female is left for him. But, in answer to this objection, it is alledged, that, as great numbers of males are killed in war, with thousands of others exposed to danger in their callings the same as they, and many of others again neglect to marry, on which account, numbers of females must therefore be disappointed of husbands, which, no doubt, is a certain fact. But where polygamy is tolerated, they ought never to be admitted to add a second wife to the first under the age of thirty or upwards; that every particular male may have time to make choice for himself of one under said years: for as thousands of females are disappointed of husbands, as in the above, it must, no doubt, prevent the increase of the human species; and it is a certain case, that where it is admitted, the people are thereby greatly increased. And for proof thereof, witness Jacob, who had four wives; two of which were what they call concubines: or if he had been married only to his beloved Rachel, who bare him only two sons, he would have had only one sixth of the family of which he was parent of.

However advantageous the tolerating of polygamy may be to a state, and to those who are disappointed of husbands, it might, I much doubt, be at some loss to those that have them: for if a man's regard is divided, there must, no doubt, be less to them that receive it. It is alledged by some, that it would make better wives; but, in reply thereto, Would it not be a pity to hurt such as are good already? And not only this, but might it not sometimes make a foolish husband take the advantage of a good wife? Be these things as they will, expensive living is, no doubt, much against marriage: for many are afraid to marry on account thereof. Frugality is good in all cases; and where polygamy is used, it would certainly require a rich or fruitful country for their support: for a poor one is what could not well support them. But no person, on account of society, ought to be admitted to more wives than one, but only such as can support them, independent of being troublesome to the community.

Some again have pled in favours of such as are married and have no children, that they should be admitted of as in the above, which, I apprehend, is not without some plausibility. And also, if a woman chance to be barren and have no children, she is, no doubt, more useful for the old than for the young. But, upon the whole, we may justly suppose, be these things as they will, it is certainly right that every man, if possessed of a sound constitution, should marry and have his own wife.

Lastly, I shall just barely add as follows: In the Mosaic institution, the Jews were discharged by Moses, and thereby prohibited against being joined in marriage with near relations, *viz.* sisters and brothers, and the like: the meaning of which was, in express terms, to prevent clans, which might thereby have raised feuds and animosities against one another: for the obliging them to be joined with distant relations, made society equally related one to another; and therefore on a balance in their love and regard to all.

SKETCH XI.

The Difference betwixt those who entertain just and proper Notions of God, and those who do not.

HE that entertaineth just and proper notions of God, and conformeth his life thereto, is always happy; on the other hand, he who represents God as acting inconsistent with himself, is always miserable. For instance, he who conceives of God as a being just and good, long-suffering and patient, abundant in mercy, happy in forgiving the repenting sinner, and also, who believes of God, not contrary, but conformable to that divine harmony which subsists among those his moral attributes, in not confounding them one with another, but lives agreeable thereto, enjoys a perpetual feast, of which no one can

possibly partake thereof but he himself; but he who conceives of God as being a hard and arbitrary master, such as implacable if once offended, never to be appeased without full or more than complete payment, not forgiving the insolvent debtor without payment of the debt (which is no forgiveness at all: for where-ever the payment of a sum takes place, no forgiveness can possibly ensue; for payment and forgiveness are an express contradiction of terms, and can no more agree together, more than light can do with darkness), or believes of God as in the above, is always miserable, and thereby puts an end to that for which he was created of God, in order that he might be happy. For when a man doth good, he is thereby dispossessed of the happiness that accrues from said action, namely, from that which God requires of him to perform, by conceiving of him as in the foregoing. But, for the better understanding of this subject, I shall therefore observe as follows. They who know the laws of their country, and comply therewith, are no burden to such; but, on the other hand, though people be willing to comply with the laws of their country, if ignorant of said laws, they, though living conformable thereto, are still in a terror by not knowing them; and even in complying, they may be guilty by coming short thereof, *viz.* of what is required in said laws: for being ignorant of what is required, causeth in such (as are willing to comply) a continual fear. By which means, the knowledge of such as are acquaint-

ed with whatever is required, keeps them always easy and happy; when, on the other hand, the ignorance of those who are unacquainted with what is required, is the very cause of their misery. But to proceed,

Whether are they who make free with the laws of their country (if not verging on that which is capital), or they who lay claim to the highest degree of religion and favour of God, and yet after all walk as with a sullen and downcast countenance, dejected looks, and disfigured faces, never appearing to the world but in such a light as if they served a hard and tyrannical master, or as if tied to the oar of a Turkish galley, most guilty? I would wish to be informed which of these two, as observed in the foregoing, are least acceptable in the sight of God; or which of the two were most dishonourable to him. But, to illustrate the above, one day in taking respite, or what may be express relaxation of spirit, and thereby refreshing myself, I met with a person of a most happy aspect or chearful countenance; whose very presence, when in company therewith, was sufficient of itself to communicate happiness to all such as had an opportunity to be admitted into fellowship and conversation with him; and asking the reason of his being so chearful, he answered thus; Why, saith he, ought I not to be chearful, when I am even blessed in serving one of the best of masters that is under the canopy itself? And if I were to appear otherwise than chearful and happy, I

would thereby not only dishonour his goodness, but even shew myself a disgrace to one of the best of sovereigns; for which cause, I ought therefore to be expelled his service for ever. And in passing somewhat farther, I met with a second person of a quite different aspect, who appeared to be altogether dejected and cast down, and of such a melancholy look, that I could not but ask the reason why he made such an appearance. He, in reply, told me he was under one of the worst, and most hard, severe, and oppressive masters, who could never be satisfied with enough, but required more service in the space of one day, than was sufficient to be executed in a month; and that in case he came short of his task, he was threatened not only to be despised, but to receive the most severe of punishments. From which we may therefore infer, that he who takes up and forms proper notions of God, and lives conformable thereto, has no reason to be otherwise than happy and chearful; and they who pretend to serve God with dejected looks, and disfigured faces or sullen countenances, are not only a dishonour, but a disgrace to the goodness of such a master as he whom they pretend to serve.

SKETCH XII.

*Of every Church being esteemed to be in the Right
by such as adhere thereto.*

IT is the opinion of every denomination of christians, that there is a pure church on earth, and that they only themselves are that church: but I tell you of a truth, that there was never yet a pure church but that which was taught by Jesus Christ to the Jews; and not only to the Jews, but even wherever it could reach to the whole human race without exception, namely, that in which the first Gentile christians were taught by the apostles. But that in which the Jews were taught was not pure; for the apostles, in teaching that people in the knowledge of the gospel, were obliged to submit to their Jewish prejudices; and, in order that they might prevent their being disgusted against complying therewith, they made the gospel to harmonize with Judaism, and thereby to become a mongrel religion. And the reason why each sect believes that theirs is the true church, proceeds from their not daring to call in question the reality of what they profess: for to call in question the sentiments of a different party or sect, is an easy matter; but to question that of their own, in which they have been bred up by their parents, is of a strange appearance; and

It is a very great hardship that they should even doubt of themselves being in the right. I know very well, say they, that others are wrong; but that I myself should doubt in what I received from my fathers, is what I cannot believe. But further, with respect to religions and religious sects,

The church of Christ, comparatively speaking, is but a very small body of people, in comparison to the rest of mankind; and yet however few in number, each sect complains of one another's uncharitableness, excluding all other sects, either as schismatics or heretics, and thereby confines salvation merely to their own church alone, independent of another. And as remarked by Dr. Scot, "While men behold the state of religion thus miserably broken and divided, and the professors of it crumbled into so many different sects and parties as it now is, and each party spitting fire and damnation at its adversary; so that, if all say true, or indeed any two of them in five hundred sects which there are in the world, and for ought I know, there may be five thousand to one, but that every one is damned; because every one damns all but itself, and itself is damned by four hundred and ninety-nine." And thus by misunderstanding the gospel, do they act one towards another, to the dishonour thereof.

And from this delusion of theirs being the true church, and all the rest false, they imagine they have a right to cut off and suppress every other sect which differs from them. This

malignant and hellish spirit was imported from Rome by one of our first reformers, *viz.* John Calvin, at whose instance Michael Servetus, a Spanish physician, was apprehended at Geneva, received sentence, and was burnt alive at the stake, on the 26th of October 1553 years, on a small eminence or rising ground without the gates of that city, for holding sentiments different from his. But, I would to God, that this malignant spirit had died with himself; but to the disgrace of those who call themselves Protestants, it did not, but has diffused itself by his followers, throughout most of the Protestant world. For proof of which, see the Protestants of late in North Britain. Upon government's proposing to soften and relax the severity of some of the statutes which had been formerly against the Papists in that country, among whom was one Begnal in the city of Glasgow, who, after they had burnt his house and destroyed all that he had, in order that he might escape the fury of the people and be safe, and finding the difference betwixt them and some of our sectaries so trifling and near a-kin to each other, became an Antiburgher Seceder. And they again, various of whom we are told are turning Roman Catholics.

And further, it is a general maxim, that after people have been once in a church (as all sects term themselves), such therein imagine they have an actual right, as one justly observes, to murder not only private persons, but even their sovereigns, for not holding what they call the orthodox faith; a notion,

indeed, highly injurious to the christian religion. And also, nor will one of all these different sects admit of the falsehood in which they believe being detected or called in question—No; for instead of enquiring into the deceit on which they rely, they will not only reject with disdain, but will immediately turn and tear you for exposing the refuge of lies in which they trust. But to return,

It may be observed, that he who would persecute another, or be hurtful thereto, either in person or in interest, contrary to Christ's commandment, on account of his religious sentiments, when not hurtful to the state, are only the devil's flow hounds thirsting for blood; therefore are by no means christians; for no one person can possibly attack another in such a manner as would be hurtful thereto, either in person or interest, on account of his religious sentiments or opinions, without being guilty of persecution. To this I may justly add, there is not one of the human race despises the mock religions, or superstitious reveries that so much abound in the world, more than I myself do; and yet, after all, I apprehend there is no person living, hath more charity towards such as have the misfortune to be bred up therein.

Hence, no person ought to be used indifferently on account of his sentiments or opinion, if not hurtful to the state—No: for however imperfect notions he may possess, the more imperfect, the less happiness will be had therein in a future state. And if, as in the above,

why ought we to torment and make them miserable, or take away the short and temporary happiness they at present possess, before the time appointed thereto by God? But to proceed,

God certainly created man in order that he should be happy; and if God created man, as in the above, none of the human race has a right to (or can possibly, without being guilty of counteracting the will of God) persecute or be hurtful to another, either in person or interest, on account of his religious sentiments or opinions, without being guilty as in the above: for they that would persecute others on account of their religion or religious sentiments, because not of the same opinion with themselves, would bring the worst, not to speak of the best, religion under heaven to disgrace, the christian, which is incomparably above all others, not excepted. Hence, and to proceed,

The company of all such persons as would persecute or be hurtful to others, either in person or in interest, on account of their religious sentiments when not to the prejudice of the state, ought to be avoided, in every respect, as much as a sheep would wish to avoid keeping company with a wolf or rapacious animal, who is ready every moment to devour it for its prey.

There is no limits to a blind, mistaken, or over-heated zeal; but a zeal according to godliness, or gospel of Christ, always carries its own evidence along with it, and is

what would not be hurtful either in person or interest, to so much as one of the human race—No. For instance, witness Paul, when a Jew he had such a zeal for Judaism, though nothing more than a counterfeit or mere mistaken religion, that he persecuted his brethren, even unto blood or death itself, though not rejecting, but on account of adding the gospel thereto; but when once convinced of his mistake, the zeal he then had and bare for the gospel of Christ, which was according to godliness, would not have been hurtful to one of the human race, neither in person nor in interest—No: for whatever comes from God acts like God; but, on the other hand, that which is of the devil, acts like the devil from whence it comes. But truth is never hurtful to any; but error not only bites, but stings, like a serpent, all those who expose it.

From hence, he that would persecute or be hurtful to another, either in person, interest, or estate, on account of his religious sentiments, when in nowise hurtful to the state, the devils have, in every respect, as good a right to believe of their being saved by the gospel as he, while persisting in such a hellish disposition or principle, as in the above. Thousands, no doubt, have believed they were serving God when acting as in the foregoing, while, meantime, nothing more than working out their own damnation. Hence, there cannot possibly be a greater or stronger evidence under heaven, of a religion being false, or doctrines thereof being corrupted and from the devil,

than that of persecution, in being hurtful to others either in person, interest, or lawful estate: for the being hurtful as in the above, to so much as one human soul on account of his religious sentiments, when not hurtful to the state, is the devil's province and not ours; therefore, to act contrary to Christ's command, which was to give no offence to any man so as to be hurtful thereto, is, in express words, a taking up arms against God, by acting in disgrace of his religion taught by Jesus Christ.

But with respect to religious truth, and of falsehood assuming the place thereof, the difference betwixt the gospel and the corruptions ingrafted thereon, *viz.* superstition, are as follows. True and undefiled religion always supports itself; but error, superstition, enthusiasm, and deceit, only by fines, imprisonments, fire and fagots, and other engines of cruelty, without having recourse thereto, could never possibly exist. But that by which superstition is supported, would bring the gospel, if applied in support thereof, unto utter, if not perpetual disgrace.

In consideration of which, it is to be remarked, that whatever religion or religious sentiments people are educated in, and bred up with, however absurd, they always think it odd or strange to call it in question or depart from it. For instance, Was it not thought very strange with both Jews and Pagans to call in question, and to depart from their supersti-

tions, on purpose that they might take hold of the gospel? And also, is it not thought, in every degree, as strange with Roman Catholics to depart from Popery and become Protestants, or rather semi-papists? However strange it may appear to the above, it is thought, in every respect, as strange with Protestants who admit of the adulteration of the gospel, to call in question whatever part of either Popery or Judaism that is ingrafted on that which they themselves profess.

Lastly, Before I conclude, I shall therefore observe as follows. There is a certain custom and of ancient date (not condemnable of itself, if too much weight was not laid thereon), which has long prevailed in the christian church; which is, when any thing critical or controverted comes to take place in matters of religion, the church, though ever so corrupt, or members thereof, in order to decide whatever contingencies may take place therein, calls an assembly; and before the disputation is opened on said point, or takes place, they first address God that they may be directed by him aright in whatever particulars concerning that affair: and according to which address, they confidently believe the circumstance will be determined. And much stress is laid on said application, by those who are chiefly concerned therein, depending that the issue will certainly turn out according to truth. But it is to be remarked, that they who are concerned therein, are fully determined beforehand in what manner it shall end. This method of opening

by prayer, is pursued not only by the priests or clergy, but is even followed by the lowest sectarians, according to the degree of superstition they possess. Now, if church affairs are infallibly directed by God, according to the addresses made thereon, as believed by the ignorant, the credulous, and unthinking crowd, and if this be their standard, from whence, then, comes all her different adulterations and corruptions, whereby she has been so much defaced; and not only brought on a level, but through her whoredoms, in adding other systems to the purity and perfection of the gospel in support thereof, as if imperfect without their additions? On account of which, and other degrees of wickedness, she is therefore become as black as the devil. Thus, in debarring of reason, both Roman Catholics, and Protestant sectarians, by trusting to the answer of their address independent of reason, have thereby almost prayed us out of the gospel of Christ, and banished his kingdom from amongst men. But truth is what can be determined on neither side but only by that candle, *viz.* reason, which was lighted by God, and set up in the human breast; but corrupt enthusiasts, by departing from said light by which we discern betwixt truth and error, or what we may call falsehood, or betwixt light and darkness, will never rest, till once they become as dark as darkness itself. And to this we may add, that wherever priests have the dominion over the consciences of the people, they, of necessity, must live in ignorance.

Hence, is it not astonishing that people admit of themselves being imposed upon in such a manner by priests, and craft of said gentlemen, as to believe doctrines wherein God is represented as to contradict and thereby confound himself: but what is more astonishing still, of the crowned heads in Europe admitting of that gross impostor the Pope, in his most false and presumptuously assuming God's authority for that which he positively holds from the devil, *viz.* in his supremacy over Christ's church.

Hence, Is it not, therefore, astonishing that the crowned heads in Europe should admit of such a beast, which has been guilty in causing so much bloodshed and devastation among the nations, to rank with them, Which beast most impiously sets himself above all the kings on earth; and has even caused them to be cast down and tremble before him. A Wonder of Wonders, indeed! that men of renown should admit of a power set up and maintained by the devil, not only to equal, but even triple above those who are set up by God, the supreme ruler of the universe!

SKETCH XIII.

Of Toleration, and the Lawfulness thereof.

MATTHEW vii. 12.

Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them: for this is the law and the prophets.

IN speaking upon this subject, we are taught by Jesus Christ, to do to others in all things, not perhaps as they do, but as we would they should do unto us. "This excellent and infallible rule, as observed by a certain author thereon, contains that most noble and perfect standard of our duty we owe to one another; which teaches us expressly, not only what we should do, but even that also which we ought actually to avoid. And it also determines exactly what kind of treatment nature prohibits with respect to the rest of mankind, as well as what it allows and requires of each individual in his social capacity: for it not only forbids every thing that is unjust, hard, severe, or cruel, but also all the lesser evils which we may inflict upon each other. Who that observes this rule will treat another with anything but friendship, humanity, condescension, respect, politeness, tenderness, goodness, cha-

rity, beneficence and the like? for such treatment we all wish to receive from others. When by such behaviour as this we diffuse happiness around us, we are following the dictates of nature, and fulfilling this most excellent law of God. When our feeling hearts expand and take in the claims of our fellow-mortals; when we comfort and relieve them in their troubles; when we are just, charitable, and benevolent to all, we are then doing by others as we would they should do by us. This rule is so excellent in its kind, so extensive in its nature, and of such universal use, that the steady and uniform practice of it would well nigh shut all moral evil out of the world, and banish a great deal of natural evil.

Who, then, can be at a loss about the practice of their duty to their fellow-creatures, since this law is written in their hearts, and, if duly attended to, will happily direct their lives? Would you know how far your good offices to mankind should extend, let this law be your guide.

All the laws of God are calculated to promote the happiness of his creatures; and all human laws should have the same object. All human laws, relative to religion or the worship of God, if they are founded in reason and nature, will tend to promote peace, harmony, and good will among mankind, otherwise God cannot approve of them; nor can they be thus founded, or be of divine origin, for the laws of nature and reason are the laws of God,

However men may have been mistaken in this point, the most acceptable service we can offer to God, is the making ourselves and others happy with innocence. But we never can please or honour God by any religious ceremony, or by assenting to any dark, mysterious, or ambiguous tenet, that has a tendency to lessen the happiness of any one person. Nothing that hurts ourselves or others can be pleasing or acceptable to God.

If mankind had always followed nature and reason in fixing their ideas of God, and of his will with regard to our social and moral practices, they never would have conceived that a being of infinite mercy and compassion, who made his creatures in order to render them happy, could be pleased with any thing cruel or unnatural, such as human sacrifices and others, as if God delighted in carnage, with that of severe penance, barbarities, and the like, *viz.* of bodily punishments. Reason teaches us, that God is always propitious to his creatures; and that he cannot be rendered more so by the sacrifice of any innocent creature whatever. The blood of bulls or of goats, or of any other creature, cannot make a sinner less a sinner. Nothing less than a change of sentiments and affections from vice, to virtue and purity, can render us objects of complacency to a God of infinite purity and uprightness. The law of nature, as well as that of the New Testament, directs and prescribes, that the worship of God should be pure and spiritual; and as God himself is a

pure and perfect Spirit, it should be the worship of the heart, founded in a just sense of the infinite perfections of God, and of our constant dependence on him, and on our warmest gratitude for the favours we receive at his hands.

By laws relative to religion, I mean those laws which are intended to regulate the mode or external form of divine worship. These may be absolutely indifferent, and can be no essential parts, if they are any, of religion, or of pure and spiritual worship. Pure and spiritual worship will not admit of prescribed forms and ceremonies, since it may be performed at any time, or in any place; as it consists alone in the purity of the heart, in the sincerity of the intention, and in the adoration of the soul. A heart filled with just sentiments of the Deity, will pursue its own opinions and modes of worship, without being offended at the opinions and forms of others. A good heart will be constantly and uniformly in proper frame and disposition for the worship of God.

Every man's opinion as to the mode of worshipping God, must be right, provided he be sincere, and his heart pure and lays no stress on the mode he follows. He cannot err whose life is innocent; who indulges others in their religious opinions without any molestation; and who has charity for all good men. As nature has not provided any fixed rule or mode of worship, mankind are evidently allowed to differ in their opinions a-

bout it; and each man hath a natural right to pursue his own. For it is, in every respect, as absurd to subject men to be all of one opinion, as to be of one stature: for the variety of the face and features thereof, are no more different than the minds of men are one to another; therefore, every man has just as good a right to enjoy his own sentiments of God, as the stature or features appointed thereto by him.

From hence, if my religious opinions are such as my reason dictates; if I am conscious that I am sincere; if my worship of God is pure and spiritual, not calculated to raise the admiration of mankind, or mixed with worldly views; if I am possessed of an awful sense of the Majesty of the Supreme Lord and Sovereign of the universe, and of the infinite distance between God and me, and am therefore humble in my own mind; if I am just, charitable, humane, and benevolent to my fellow creatures, Can it be material what mode of worship I profess, or by what religious appellation I am distinguished? In this case, Who can justly be offended with me, or punish me for my religious opinions? I hope to be excused for thus departing from my text, as this digression is intended to prove, illustrate, and convince men, how very unnatural, and how much a breach of Christ's most excellent rule, which I am now speaking of, it is to persecute, or any way ill treat our fellow creatures, on account of difference of opinions, or of modes in religious matters. God

is the only Judge in matters of conscience; and those who do not like my modes and opinions, may abstain from them. He who can search the heart, and he only, can judge of its sincerity. Now, truth and sincerity, if properly placed, are the very essence of the religion of nature republished by Jesus Christ. Why should we be angry with one another? Why should anathemas resound from the pulpit (where nothing but truth should be heard) against persons of different opinions, who probably are as good and virtuous, and as much the objects of the divine favour, as those who censure and condemn them? This is actually a flagrant breach of the above mentioned excellent law.

Hence, we all love liberty of every kind; but liberty of conscience seems to be a birth-right privilege, of a kind which no power hath a right to deprive us of. If a man be wicked, Can it be material what his opinions of modes and ceremonies are? Can they purify one evil action, or rectify one corrupt affection? The wicked man's actions will condemn him under any form of religion. On the other hand, if a man be good and virtuous, can it signify what religion (if conformable to the religion of nature) he professes, provided it be not contrary in its modes to our social and civil ideas of decency? His goodness and his virtue will be rewarded by God, though his opinions differ ever so widely from the established forms of his country. The grand inquiry, if any is made, should be about a

man's moral character. Is he just, charitable, and benevolent, in the general course of his life? Does he practise the virtues of morality, and strive to diffuse happiness through the world? If he does, his principles cannot be bad: for the tree is known by its fruit; and bad principles will not produce good actions.

Hence, nature never intended that we should all think alike as to religious forms and ceremonies: if she had, some fixed rule would have been prescribed to us; some rule which the light of nature would have been capable of discovering universally. But it is evident, nature did intend that we should be patient, charitable, humane, and forgiving; and that we should do to others, as we would they should do unto us. After all, it is amazing that those whose business it is to teach the rule to others, and to enforce the practice of it, both by precept and example, should neglect it themselves, as to persecute and cruelly use their brethren, on account of their religious opinions. This, in express words, is adopting even the very worst and greatest error of the church of Rome. Some of its fooleries may be retained, without much mischief, unless persons pay so great a regard to them, as to neglect things of importance; but that they should copy out the worst part of the worst religion, is indeed surprising, especially as they have protested against her pernicious tenets, and have separated themselves from communion with her.

Liberty of conscience hath been the darling

theme of some of the greatest writers of this and the last age. To repeat their arguments against persecution, will be more to the purpose, than any thing I can say of my own.

I would therefore, in a particular manner, recommend the great Mr. Locke's treatise on toleration, and a piece lately published by that celebrated writer Dr. Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester, entitled, *The doctrine of grace*. From which last piece, I shall transcribe some few passages relative to this subject.

In page 199, the Bishop says, "If any good use can be made of what hath been already said, it will be chiefly promoted by these reverend men, who, in honour of the church which they serve, and in gratitude to the state by which they are protected, will make it their first care to support that most just of all public laws, the law of toleration, which, how long soever obstructed in its passage to us, and how late soever arrived amongst us, is certainly of divine original." Here the Bishop asserts, that the law of toleration (like the law of nature) is of divine original. To this he adds, page 204, "But then, if we shew ourselves thus rightly disposed in favour of this divine principle of toleration." And in page 213. "For with religious errors, as such, the state hath nothing to do, nor any right to attempt to repel or suppress them. Religious quarrels, which produce mischief, generally arise from persecution; but the toleration of opinions will certainly tend to prevent religious quarrels, and all the mischiefs

which may arise therefrom. The church, with a watchful eye, guards against every thing that may tend to weaken its authority; yet, in such a state as our's, where the true spirit of liberty prevails and flourishes, the church finds its greatest security in the divine principle of toleration.

Religious quarrels may produce mischief; but if people are suffered peaceably to enjoy their own opinions, there will be no quarrelling, and of course no mischief." The bishop goes on, "But of this separation, whether with or without cause, there is no adequate judge, but that power which can distinguish between a well and an ill-informed conscience." I shall add one observation more of this rational bishop, in favour of toleration and against persecution, which I wish were wrote in letters of gold, and placed in the most conspicuous part of the church. Page 201, he says, "In a word, the church, in which religious liberty is cordially entertained and zealously supported, may be truly called christian: for if the mark of the beast be persecution, as the sacred volume deciphers to us, well may we put toleration as the seal of the living God. This then is our present boast."

Thus hath this rational bishop directed the clergy how to act in this important affair, and given his opinion, that the human laws reach not the conscience of men. Would to God, that all those in power, both in church and state, would ever remember that God has reserved to himself the knowledge and judgment

of the human heart; and that he cannot be pleased with having his authority usurped. One would think, that the judges of the earth should tremble, when they pronounce sentence on their brethren in things of which God alone can be the judge. How irrational and unchristian is it for the rulers of the church to influence and add weight to the arm of civil power, in the invasion of the rights of conscience, instead of following the example of Christ and his apostles? How absurd, that they should copy from the inquisition, and substitute corporal punishments in the room of reason and instruction? This is not acting like rational beings, but like beasts, who, having no arguments to support their cause, recur to force.

Conscience is a steady friend to truth, or, at least, to what appears to be true. No bodily punishments can alter or lessen this attachment. Reason may convince a man of his error; but the punishment of his body hath no such tendency.

Persecution is the bane of truth and sincerity. It never informs or convinces the judgment, but always tends to establish hypocrisy, ignorance, and superstition; and therefore is uncharitable and diabolical. And, as observed by a celebrated author, liberty of thinking is an impregnable fortress, which cannot be overcome; and that force may, no doubt, make hypocrites, but true profelytes it never possibly can.

After all, if the most excellent precept of

nature and of Christ, which is the subject of this article, will not prevent persecution, surely nothing possibly can.

Tell me, ye who persecute and evil treat such as differ from you in religious opinions, tell me whether this rule be written in your hearts; and farther, tell me whether that can be a good religion which tolerates persecution. Surely, there cannot be a stronger mark of a bad one.

If you apprehend a man's opinion to be erroneous, you are taught by your great master, whom you pretend to serve, to restore such a one in the spirit of meekness by reason and argument, and not by punishment; the one may cure, the other confirm his errors. The friends of virtue and true religion can never possibly be the friends of persecution. For it always injures and weakens the cause of virtue, and establishes hypocrisy and superstition on the ruins of true religion.

Reason obliges us to conform to the laws of virtue. Now, the laws of virtue are altogether conformable to the divine will. Nature and reason, as well as christianity, teach us expressly, that it is the immutable will of God, that his creatures should be happy. Where, then, can an excuse for persecution be found? Not in reason, not in nature, not in true christianity, or at least in that gospel which is taught by Jesus Christ—No: for it is directly opposite to the will of God; and therefore, is diabolical, having, as exprest by Dr. Warburton, the true mark of the beast, that three headed mon-

ster, their adulterous mother, the great whore, from whom they hold their deploma.

With respect to this subject, it is therefore now evident, that persecution, *viz.* the persecuting men for speculative opinions, not hurtful to the state, has no foundation from the law and religion of nature republished by Jesus Christ; but toleration is what actually has. Hence, persecution derives its birth, and has its authority, from the devil; but the origin of toleration is from God above. To distinguish true religion from false, and test of its coming from heaven or not, is as follows. That which cometh from God, the fountain of life, can never possibly be hurtful thereto—No: but that which is counterfeit, or from beneath, thirsteth for blood with an insatiable desire to make slaves of the souls of men. For proof thereof, see Luke ix. Christ, when on his way to Jerusalem, and his disciples in their going thither, being refused entertainment by the Samaritans; on which two of his disciples, *viz.* James and John, being only of a counterfeit religion, and altogether ignorant of the gospel of Christ, exprest themselves conformable to the religion they were of, and said, “Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume” or destroy “them, as Elias did? But Christ,” who taught the law and religion of nature, “turned, and rebuked them sharply, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy mens lives but to save them.”

From which we may justly infer, a religion that cometh from God giveth life and vigour, not only to the soul, but also to the body; but that which is from beneath, thirsts for the destruction of both. Christ tells the Jews; the professors of Judaism, which was from beneath, and was founded in blood, "They were of their father the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning; and the works of their father they would do."

Further, witness Roman Catholics, by whom the world is turned into a mere shamble, or field of blood; and who are even the declared enemies of toleration. Nor is this rapacious and blood-thirsty spirit circumscribed to Roman Catholics—No: for all such who have not yet renounced the worst part of her principles in thirsting for blood, are enemies thereto as well as she; and if not limited by the civil power, would run into the same excess with herself. This I am certain of from what they avowedly profess; an instance of which is, one day, a certain sectarian priest, to whom I was both an eye and ear witness, in addressing his Maker, like another true son of his harlot mother, expressed himself as follows, 'Lord, may thou hasten and put a stop to this boundless toleration.' This is what no person could possibly either petition or wish for, if not an express monster of ignorance, or enemy to the human race.

Lastly, I shall conclude with the following remark. A man whose religion is wholly a-

dapted to the nature and moral attributes of God, because he refuses to depart therefrom, and comply with what is opposite thereto, may, no doubt, be supposed stiff in his opinion; but, as observed by the immortal Tillotson, "It is neither immodesty, nor a culpable singularity, for a man to stand alone in the defence of the truth." For, adds this venerable prelate, "If all the great mathematicians of all ages, Archimedes, Euclid, Appollonius, and Diophantus, could be supposed to meet together in a general council, and should even declare in the most solemn manner, and give it under their hands and seals, that twice two did not make four, but five, this would not move me in the least to be of their mind; for I, who am no mathematician, would maintain the contrary, and would persist in it, without being in the least startled by the positive opinion of these great and learned men; and should most certainly conclude, that they were either all of them out of their wits, or that they were biassed by some interest or other; and swayed against the clear evidence of truth, and the full conviction of their own reason, to make such a determination as this. They might, indeed, over-rule the point by their authority; but in my inward judgment, I should still be where I was before."

But instead of being positive from reason, as in the above, thousands, if not millions, are stiff from ignorance, altogether independent of reason, in the opinions they adopt, though never so opposite to the moral attributes

of God. But though stiff from ignorance, as in the above, they are by no means to be persecuted and punished for the misfortune of being born and bred up under this or the other different opinion, a thing altogether out of their power to help. In short, it is, in every respect, as absurd to oblige people to be of one opinion in religion, as to oblige them to be all born on one day.

From hence, reason ought certainly to be our guide in matters of religion; and likewise our judge to direct us of its being from God, and agreeable to his will or not: for of this every human soul may be perfectly assured, of their reason being from heaven, and that God is the author thereof. But though assured of reason being the gift of heaven to direct us in all things agreeable to the will of God, not one of the human race can possibly, upon the same foundation, be equally assured of the opinions of men, in which they believe, having come from God, or of their being agreeable to him; therefore ought to act rationally with respect to matters of religion, and with charity one to another, the same as in all other civil affairs in life. For if reason is discharged from this its impartial office, all religions will inevitably be on a level one with another; and if on a level, each thereof must, therefore, pass as being equal and divine together.

Lastly, And to conclude this sketch, let such as are enemies to toleration consider as follows. If living in a Mahometan or Popish country,

would they not wish to enjoy the liberty of their religion, or opinion which they themselves thought right? Most certainly. Now, if they wish to be tolerated, as in the above, Why should they deprive others of that which they themselves wish to possess?

Now, may heaven forbid, that such as have any just ideas of God, should be subject to a power governed by superstition, to which scarce any limits can be set, either as to the actions or belief of such as are governed thereby. Hence, many of whom, from a blind zeal for the glory of God, have persecuted and put thousands to death on account of their religious opinions; and thereby, from pure mistake, thought they were actually doing God service; though, mean time, instead of serving God, they were, in express words, ignorantly serving the devil.

SKETCH XIV.

Of an Enthusiastical Belief.

THE doctrine in vogue is, "Believe in Christ, and ye shall be saved." But the gospel meaning of which is, believe in the doctrines that Christ taught, by putting them in practice, and ye shall be saved. Thousands, by taking hold of believing instead of practice, make themselves believe they shall be saved as in the above, independent of the

practice. Many of which, not only live, but die, in this belief; and they bear enmity against such who believe to be saved by practising the gospel, or duties taught therein by Jesus Christ, and remain as much unsubdued in their hearts as ever; which is certainly a shocking departure! But to proceed,

There is a certain degree of enthusiasm in all religions, the christian, when superstition is ingrafted thereon, not excepted: for they are even confident, though under the greatest delusion, that they are perfectly assured of their being in the right. All of which belief proceeds from a suspending the rational powers from acting their proper function; but when once this most noble faculty is suspended, cut off, or set aside, men, *viz.* such as in the above, can, with the greatest ease, suppose themselves able to walk not only upon the water, but even upon the very air itself. This, no doubt, is actually a disease on the rational system or faculties thereof; but if it should please God to awaken such blind and ignorant mortals from out of such a delusion or belief, as that each of these powers have liberty to act their proper functions, they will certainly look back thereon with astonishment, like one when recovered from a delirium, in reflecting on his actions during the time of his madness. But, to be plain, a belief, though ever so much assured thereof, if not founded on reason, is the same with him who founded his house upon the sand; so that, when the winds blew and storms beat thereon, the floods prevailed a-

gainst it, it fell, and great was the fall thereof. (Mark this) An assurance, independent of reason, is the same as in the above. But further,

As to people being perfectly assured of their being in the right independent of the above test, *viz.* reason, which is the gift of heaven to direct us in that in which we believe, or rather ought to believe, of its not being contrary, but conformable to the moral attributes of God, though a person should be never so much assured of the earth being the centre of the world, or rather the solar system, and of its being stedfast and immoveable; as almost the whole human race are assured in such an established error, will that make it a fact, or convert such a gross falsehood into a truth, when the earth's motion, both diurnal round its axis, and its annual round the sun, proving him to be the centre, is evident to the highest demonstration, that even the whole creation that ever did, does, or shall exist, are incapable to refute, or produce one letter of the alphabet to overturn it? No, they never possibly can. Now though the world believe with the utmost confidence in the above error, Will their assurance convert that falsehood into a truth? No, it never possibly can: for it is, in every respect, as possible for nature to exist and not exist at the same instant, as it is possible for assurance to change error into truth, or an actual truth into error.

And further, as to people being in the right, does any one sect suppose of their being wrong

in what they believe? No. For instance, Are not the Mahometans assured of their being in the right? Certainly. And are not Roman Catholics assured of their being infallibly right? And do not all different sects among Protestants believe of their being perfectly in the right, *viz.* every different sect therein believes of their being righter than another? But will the belief of any one sect, because assured, make that, in which they believe, right and acceptable in the sight of God? No, certainly not. Or, is it possible for any one sect to believe in that which is contrary to reason, and be right therein agreeable to truth? No, not possible.

Hence, may not the consideration thereof teach every person to search with candour for the impartial and unbiassed truth, in what he believes. But the greater the delusion, the greater is the assurance of those who embark therein. An instance of which is, both Henry the Third and Henry the Fourth, kings of France, on account of favouring the Protestant cause, were assassinated and stabbed to death, the one by James Clement a Dominican Friar, the other by Ravillac a Jesuit, acting from an express confidence of their being serving God. And when put to the torture, in order to give up his accomplice, all they could possibly extract from him, *viz.* Ravillac, was in write as follows, "Let Jesus be always victorious in my heart." Signed *Ravillac*. And also, Lewis the XIV. was assassinated from the same principle by another enthusiast. Though each of these

enthusiasts acted from a zeal for the glory of God, in the cause of their religion (though equal, if not worse, than the devil) in the murder, namely in taking away the lives of their sovereigns, Was this any just proof of its being from God? No, I apprehend not. Now, since the above is no just proof of what they actually believed being from God, neither is a belief, though supported by millions, of their being in the right, a just proof, because assured as in the above, of their being right and acceptable in the sight of God—No, certainly not.

Further, a known argument used by such as require of people to believe in falsehood, is as follows. Can you understand the things of nature and the properties thereof, so as to comprehend them? and because incapable to understand, are we, therefore, to misbelieve of their existence? No, certainly not. But to shew the weakness and vanity of such an inconclusive argument, Is there any thing necessary to our salvation, depends upon our knowing or not knowing the properties as in the above, so as that we should believe therein? No, I apprehend not. And if nothing depends on the knowledge thereof; therefore it has not the smallest reference to peoples' believing in that of which they are ignorant and cannot understand.

But, with respect to the above, in requiring of men to believe in falsehood, or in that which is above reason to comprehend, as observed by a certain author, "Although self-interested and designing men very well know,

that it is impossible to believe when we know not what it is we are to believe, or to believe an absurd or contradictory proposition; yet they, because, without examination, people may be brought to fancy they believe such and such things, and it being their interest to confound mens' understandings, and thereby prevent all inquiry, craftily invented the notion of believing things above reason: here the ravings of an enthusiast are on a level with the dictates of infinite wisdom; and nonsense, or rather worse, is thereby rendered most sacred: here a contradiction is of great use to maintain a doctrine, that, when fairly stated, is not defensible; because by talking backward and forward, by using obscure terms, and taking words in different senses, they may easily amuse and puzzle the people. On this foundation transubstantiation is built, and most of those mysterious propositions, about which, in former days, christians so frequently murdered each other."

From hence, methinks I just now perceive some of these antirational priests, my antagonists, begin to tremble, and hear them saying, 'I much doubt, that this book will seduce' and turn many away from the faith.' But, in answer to such, Did not the apostles turn many of both Jews and Gentiles from the faith, viz. the ridiculous and absurd falsehoods in which each thereof trusted and believed in as divine truth? And also, Did not our reformers turn many from the faith, viz. Popery and

falsehoods thereof, in which they trusted? And so will this book, from the superstition, falsehood, and deceit, ingrafted on the gospel by the craft and artifice of priests, *viz.* self-interested, and designing men. But to this it is objected, saying, If thou hast faith (as expressed by the apostle) and believest contrary to the church, or received opinion thereof, have it to thyself. But, in reply thereto, Did either the apostles, or yet our reformers, keep their faith unto themselves? If they had, we had all, for certain, been in darkness unto this day. And in proof of the apostles not keeping their faith unto themselves, they were oft-times persecuted both by Jews and Gentiles, and even to death at last, for not keeping their faith unto themselves. But remember, though persecuted, it was only by Jews and Heathens, *viz.* Pagans, the same as our reformers were by mongrel or nominal christians, for not keeping their faith unto themselves as in the above.

From hence, it follows, if peoples' being assured of their being in the right, be a proof of the infallibility of what they profess, the same evidence will serve to prove, as has been observed, both Mahometans and Roman Catholics (because perfectly assured of what they profess being right), in every respect, as right as they. But though people had all the assurance in the world of their being in the right, if that in which they believe be not conformable to the nature and attributes of God, it is even lighter than vanity; therefore,

altogether unprofitable, and can yield no advantage to such neither in this world, nor in that which is to come. But it is to be remarked, that it is not an assurance of our being in the right, that will make that an infallible truth in which we believe—No; but we must first try if that in which we believe be conformable to the nature and moral attributes of God, before we can trust thereto: for without being conformable, as observed in the foregoing, it is certainly false, and therefore not to be depended upon, as in the above.

Hence, what numbers of people dream not only in being acquainted with, but even pretend to be adepts in the knowledge of Christ's religion, and yet, after all, are, in every respect, as ignorant of the real principles thereof, as the very Hottentots; who, through hearing thereof by such as call themselves christians, are altogether ignorant of the knowledge thereof.

Lastly, there are many of both clergy and laymen, who are advocates for the different doctrines detected in this system, that pretend to be adepts in understanding of the christian religion, who are, in every respect, as ignorant of the real and true knowledge, or meaning of the gospel taught by Jesus Christ, as a mere child of six years of age; or else they would never propagate and patronize doctrines inconsistent with the moral attributes of God, whereby they are represented to contradict and thereby confound each other—No,

certainly not. But, in order that all such doctrines or articles of faith, for which they are pleased to ascribe God's authority, may pass for divine truth, independent of the above test, *viz.* the moral perfections of God, they tell us expressly, that we know nothing of the moral attributes of God; therefore, they are no rule whereby we are to be directed in the knowledge of him, as that either doctrines or articles of faith should be measured by said test, so as to become the standard thereof. But, in answer to the rejecting of the above test, it is strange! yea, very strange reasoning indeed! of men to ascribe perfections to God as being possessed thereof, and yet refuse these moral attributes they actually allude to him, to be the standard of his will, so as to be regulated thereby.

But further, they likewise assert, saying, how can we know that there is a God, or of his being possessed of attributes or not, but by revelation, without which, we had been altogether ignorant thereof? But, in answer to which, not to go to particulars, in the first place, Does not all nature, without exception, tell us expressly there is a first cause? For no one thing therein can possibly give being to itself. Also, Do we not see all nature, *viz.* every thing after its kind, perfect, and complete (except that which is preternatural); consequently, if the effect is perfect, the cause thereof must certainly be more perfect and complete still, by which it was produced. And, in the second place, Does not reason

teach us expressly, that in all our dealings with others, we still wish to be used well therein; consequently gives them the same claim to be used by us as we wish to be used by them: this is what we call justice. And if all this is found in the effect, it must, therefore, certainly proceed from the first cause which produced it. Nor has this first cause given being to all, and no more—No: for it actually supplies them in all their wants; therefore, is good as well as just; and if both just and good, is certainly divine, or what we call holy, just, and good. And if, as in the above, he is therefore God infinite, in all, and in and through all, the supreme agent, and first cause of all.

From hence, and to conclude; I heartily wish men would improve that of which they cannot possibly get past: for what is here expressed depends upon neither mysteries nor miracles for its evidence, but is wrote in the heart of every rational breast of the human race. Now, for people to reject and despise reason, and believe to be saved through mere belief, independent of duty, is, in express words, to go to heaven upon hearsay, in place of evidence.

SKETCH XV.

That the Gospel is Adulterated by adding Judaism thereto, with other corrupt Doctrines ingrafted thereon by Priests, made evident.

ALL sects claim the purity of Christ's religion, as taught and administered to them by their priests. But, for proof of the gospel being perverted by adding Judaism thereto, see the many different divisions that take place therein; which are an incontestable evidence of the above, and thereby puts it beyond all dispute to every human soul of an unbiassed judgment, who has heard or been acquainted therewith. But to proceed,

In pursuing of this subject, the different divisions which take place and abound in Christendom, are an incontestable evidence of Christ's gospel being adulterated from its original purity, by Judaism being ingrafted thereon: for if not perverted, no division could possibly take place therein—No. Adulteration is the alone parent and immediate cause of division; and variance or discord is an express contradiction to infallibility. (Mark this) If God is one, his religion is also one; therefore, cannot be divided. But to this it may be objected, the apostles themselves were divided; therefore, how can others but be divided in their sentiments thereon, namely the

gospel? But, in answer to this objection, the apostles were, no doubt, divided in their sentiments thereon: for if they had not been divided in their sentiments, no ground of dispute could possibly have taken place in their society. But what deserves our particular notice is, the apostles were only divided in their sentiments by adding Judaism to the gospel, as if it had stood in need thereof for its support; but were never divided in the purity of the gospel, independent of Judaism—No, they never were; which is an incontestable evidence of the inconsistency of Judaism, and of the heinous evil of which they were guilty in blending it with the simplicity of the gospel, to the adulteration thereof: for if the gospel be from God, as it certainly is, it is, no doubt, infinitely perfect; and if perfect, nothing can possibly be added to that which is complete, without an adulteration of the whole to which it is added.

Hence, the above is such an incontestable truth, that, I apprehend, Christendom itself cannot prove it otherwise.

With respect to the certainty and perfection of the gospel, and of a religion being depended upon for truth, and of its having come from God or not, an incontestable evidence of which is, not a syllable of the gospel, when taught independent of Judaism, as expressed by Jesus Christ, if properly understood, contradicts another; but there are scarce two pages in Judaism, but what contradict and thereby confound each other.

From hence, it is, in every respect, as possible for heaven and earth to exist independent of God, as it is possible for contradictions coming from, or being required by him, or of his being the author thereof. But to preach the simplicity of the gospel (the same as taught the Gentiles) to such as believe in Judaism, independent of the different corruptions ingrafted thereon by Judaizing teachers, would, as exprest by Jesus Christ of the bigoted Jews in despising the gospel, be only casting pearls before swine, who would not only trample thereon, but also turn and rent you.

But to conclude this sketch, the ingrafting of lies, with other false and horrid prodigies, on the gospel of Christ, of which the Jewish history and superstition is composed, has certainly, above all others, been most hurtful to the spread thereof, *viz.* the gospel, in preventing its being diffused among the nations.

SKETCH XVI.

Of those who Patronize Doctrines contrary to the Moral Attributes of God.

I Know nothing about which people are more divided in their opinions (which is derogatory to the honour of God), than that of religion: for some represent God therein entirely conformable to himself; others again,

diametrically opposite thereto. But, in answer to all those my antagonists, on account of my religious sentiments, the difference betwixt your doctrines and mine are as follows: The whole of my sentiments hinge and depend, as the links of a chain, one upon another; but to the contrary, as to your opinions and doctrines built thereon, there are scarce two articles of which hinge upon another—No: for you tell your hearers, that one part of mankind are predestinated to eternal life, and the other, *viz.* the remainder, to inevitable damnation. If all men were eternally decreed, as in the above, is it possible they could exceed the determination of that to which they were destinated? No, certainly not. And you tell them further, they can do nothing that is good or acceptable in the sight of God, or come unto him that they may have life; and then presently you envite and tell them it is their own fault if they do not come. Now, What is all this contrast? It is a representing of God, as if sporting wantonly with his creatures, by his enviting them to come to him that they may have life, after their being laid under an irrevocable sentence, and thereby decreed over to eternal misery; by which he had put it altogether out of their power either to come or accept of happiness.

*Perverse mankind, whose will's created free,
Charge all their woes on absolute decree.*

*All to the dooming Gods their crimes translate;
And follies are miscall'd, the crimes of fate.*

A strange! yea, a very strange contrast, indeed! First telling people they cannot come for lack of power, and next telling them it is their own fault if they do not come; and thereby upbraid them for not coming! In short, every piece of your system is like another; a downright rapsody; a heap of mere contradictions.

And further, nor is this all—No: for they, *viz.* priests, oft-times exclaim and cry out against people for not attending upon their harangues; but their patronizing doctrines wherein God is represented as acting altogether inconsistent with himself, is an express antidote to every person of judgment against attending thereon, namely, such tenets, as of mens natures being corrupted by virtue of Adam's first transgression, or what they call original sin (*viz.* the priest's hobby horse), with others of like nature built thereon; by which they are rendered incapable to obey and do the will of God, or do so much as one good action, without being impelled thereto by the impulse of divine agency, additional to the powers of which they are actually possessed from God in their first formation.

*Some cry with Calvin, man's a mere machine;
Others cry out, he's damn'd for Adam's sin.
Such horrid thoughts, impious to the cause
A God of nature make, while they adore her laws.*

In consideration of which, the difference betwixt your systems and mine are so different

in their natures, that no person, in his right wits, can possibly escape perceiving it: for you wantonly borrow and ascribe God's authority for false and absurd doctrines, inconsistent with his nature, and threaten every soul of man with inevitable damnation, that will not receive them; but I leave every person at pleasure to receive or not receive, according as it deserves credit. For instance, if a piece of gold is both weight and quality, no person will refuse it for value; but if wanting, as in the above, it will by no means pass, but in peril, or when in risk of losing the sum. As in the one, so does it exactly agree in the other.

Hence, a bad account of doctrines indeed! when there is not as much therein as give them credit to pass without the penalty of inevitable damnation being annexed to the refusing thereof. But to this we may add, that all such, whether priests or laymen, who propagate and patronize doctrines wherein God is represented as acting inconsistent with himself, may, with just propriety, be called the devil's statesmen: for you, like the devil, whose children you certainly are, would, if in your power, both persecute and send to hell every human soul who differs from your systematical belief. And at least so far, though the above is out of your power, your wish and language implies, that God would do it for you. This by your actions, and the expressions of your mouths against such, is what you nei-

ther possibly can nor dare, for your very souls, deny the charge. But my sentiments, conformable to Jesus Christ and his gospel, would neither persecute, hurt, molest, nor send to hell (independent of bad morals) so much as one of the human race, on account of his difference in religious opinions, nor wish that God would act so towards them—No.

From hence, I therefore charge you, in the name of God, to look hereunto, and behold what you really are: for no person can possibly persecute or be hurtful to another, either in person or interest, for his difference in opinion or religious sentiments, but in so doing, he thereby, as observed by Jesus Christ, makes himself an express child of the devil. But to proceed,

The difference betwixt your religion and mine is as follows. The religion in which I wish to rest, worship, and serve God, will, as required by Jesus Christ, admit of nothing hurtful to any person, either in body or in effects, on account of his religious sentiments; but yours, like the devil, contrary to Jesus Christ, is to be hurtful to both on account thereof. But heaven is no farther distant, or more opposite to hell, than what persecution (in being hurtful to others, either in person or interest, on account of their difference in religious opinions), is distant from, or opposite to the gospel of Christ: for the sun was never more distinct, when visible in the meridian, than what the above is to every unprejudiced soul and person of judgment, that from the past

expressions of your mouths, it is therefore altogether out of your power to prove it otherwise.

But further, to such we may add, as observed in the foregoing, of those who anathematize and pronounce inevitable damnation against those of the Heathen world, that the text on which they found and draw this assertion, is from Proverbs xxix. 18. first clause, "Where there is no vision the people perish." And also, Rom. x. 14. "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" That without the means of the gospel, as observed in the above, to which they alledge they cannot possibly be saved. Hence, what is here supposed is certainly not without some plausibility; but, in answer to this objection, infants, by reason of their being incapable of the use of means, must therefore perish, as well as the Heathen world. But of this they alledge, that God may work in them, *viz.* infants, by the supernatural aid of his divine Spirit, though insensible to us. But, in reply to which, if God works on infants by his Spirit, to the saving of their souls, he certainly, with the same ease, can, in every respect, just as well work by the aid of his divine Spirit on those of the Heathen nations for their salvation unto life, as upon infants, who never knew there was a God. But no person needs be afraid of the anathemas of

these gentlemen, more than of the bizzing of an asp after deprived of its sting; the one is just, in every respect, of as little effect as the other. Hence, but though such may impiously usurp God's authority, in pronouncing inevitable and eternal damnation, without mercy, upon the Heathen world, Jesus Christ, if I mistake not myself, nowhere has. But, to proceed,

Conformable to the doctrines of these gentlemen, who threaten every one with inevitable damnation that will not believe nor accept thereof, it is much the same with such priests, *viz.* those legal or orthodox clergy, as with those who breed up spaniels; it is reported, that the more they chastise these kind of animals, the more they cringe and love them; by which they who are teachers thereof, can boast of making these brutes to set even to a stone in the field (wherein no scent or smell is to be found) if they require it. In like manner, I have known what they call an orthodox priest, ascribe the authority of Almighty God, in order to give sanction to what he sets forth, and requires a belief in from those who hear and attend thereon. But nominal orthodoxy, independent of that which is divine, is at best but a piece of mere devilry and deceit; or in other words, a tricking men out of their souls: for of all villanies under the sun, I apprehend, there is none to equal or exceed that of priestcraft, for stealing, or rather worming, people out of their judgments, and making slaves of the souls of men, in their tacitly submitting

to whatever they please to impose on their credulity.

But further, I shall here add an incontestable evidence, by which we may know the defendants and allies of the beast. They always threaten and lay every one under inevitable damnation, that will not believe and receive, as infallible, whatever their superstitious and enthusiastic brains dictate to them. But, to return,

Hence, there is nothing could possibly have been so gross, false, or unjust, even though sufficient to have affronted the devil, but what he said, in having the assurance to profane God's Sovereignty, in confirmation of what he required a belief in of those who heard him, telling them, that as God is Sovereign, there was nothing impossible for him to do, and had a just right to require a belief therein from his creatures. And in order to enforce what he required of the people to believe, even though ever so absurd, and contrary to the moral attributes of God, he, like the spaniel's master (in chastising him), threatened every soul of those that heard him, with inevitable damnation, in being thrown into hell, and there tormented for ever, upon their misbelief in not receiving as truth that which he required of them to believe. On which, to evite the above, they (like the spaniel, in complying with his master's orders) thereby cringe and receive as infallible, whatever he required of them to believe.

Hence, a most shocking theology indeed!

in using the Sovereignty of God, as in the foregoing, to the confusion and disgrace of all his divine attributes, by setting them at enmity, in confounding them one with another.

Thus, in using the Sovereignty of God in support of doctrines irreconcilable with the rectitude of his nature, to the disgrace of his moral attributes, is, in express terms, a reducing the Creator of heaven and earth to what we may call a mere shadow without a substance, or sound without meaning, which is no God at all.

But further, in respect to this subject, one thing I cannot but remark, and deserves our particular notice, which is; It is an established maxim with both priests and laymen, who propagate and patronize infamous and absurd doctrines, contrary to the pure rectitude and moral attributes of God, that they (however absurd and contrary to the above in what they advance), to cover the deceit, and thereby conceal the fraud (that it may pass unsuspected, and appear of divine institution with the ignorant and unthinking crowd) betake themselves to the Sovereignty of God in support thereof. And when the blasphemy of prostrating, *viz.* in using God's Sovereignty to the confounding of his moral attributes in support of their wild and disgraceful doctrines, or hypotheses, are detected, they, being conscious to themselves of the impossibility of making an answer in support thereof according to truth, and therefore, lest being attacked, to save their characters, and prevent being dis-

lodged of their refuge of lies, in which they confide, to avoid the reply, anathematize and send to hell all such, without exception, or yet mercy, who reject and will not receive or comply therewith. I repeat it again, they, in short, who wantonly trample upon the Sovereignty of God, in betaking themselves thereto in support of what they vainly ascribe his authority, as in the above, are, in express terms, begging the question in order to give sanction thereto, and thereby prevent the ignorant from inquiring into the absurdity of what they impiously hold forth, impose, and require of them to believe in as divine truth.

And further, I tell you of a truth, and in the authority of heaven, that they who, because God is all-powerful, and all-sovereign, vainly ascribe his authority in support of whatever will not conform with his moral and divine attributes, thereby wantonly blaspheme the God of heaven, the Supreme Legislator and God of the universe, by their presumptuously applying thereto, in order that they may the easier deceive the people.

And further, I shall just barely add, the doctrine of man's being depraved by virtue of Adam's transgression, and thereby rendered incapable to resist sin, obey, and do the will of God, which is, in express words, actually an apologizing for all manner of sin, *viz.* every particular vice of which he is guilty in the sight of heaven. But for men to believe contrary to what they are taught by their priests,

though ever so absurd, is with what people can by no means admit to give place thereto. Hence, what is here exprest in the foregoing, is the steady and uniform practice of the true sons and allies of the beast, that three-headed monster, the great whore, their harlot and adulterous mother, from whom alone they receive and hold their diploma. The above is an incontestable evidence of whom, and of whose children they are. But to proceed,

I would not, for the whole creation, be guilty of such injustice, falsehood, and deceit, as in what light some of which represent their Maker. In short, it would be an affront offered to any being better than the devil, to be a God to some of these consecrated gentlemen and their adherents, considering for what they ascribe his authority. But to this we may add, the reign of priest-craft, however much esteemed by ignorant and superstitious men, has certainly, in all ages, been the most hurtful, and effectual bar against the diffusing and spread of divine knowledge. Let us, therefore, not only be aware against believing in sentiments as articles of faith, contrary to the moral attributes of God, but let us always weigh and see that they be conformable thereto: for, if not conformable to what is here exprest, we are deceiving ourselves, and those who believe therein for truth.

Hence, each of you, my antagonists, may be compared to phosphorus lights which only shine in the dark; but when brought to the light, no illumination is found therein. Si-

milar thereto, the patriots of each sect appear great and shining lights amongst themselves, namely, among the ignorant and unthinking crowd; but, like phosphorus (when brought to the light), they have no knowledge or light in them, when tried to reason with men of judgment. Each of whom are all great men among themselves; but, as observed in the above, are even as nothing, when compared with men or people of understanding.

Lastly, may that day be hastened, when men, agreeable to the above test, shall be taught the gospel of Christ, not contrary, but conformable to the moral attributes of God, according to truth, and not to the disgrace thereof. Hence, of all other deceits under the sun, that of priest-craft is certainly the greatest: for in putting on grimaces, they not only delude the people, but, in express words, cozen them out of both their souls and silver. And, instead of people being aware against the deceit, Is it not astonishing to see them not only submit, but even happy in being deceived, and thereby cheated out of both, as in the above? Nor is this all—No: for they even love and are happy in collecting sums in support of those who perfect them in the deceit. Nor is this predominance subject to those of the present age alone—No: for it is express by Isaiah, in his accusing the Jews, his kinsmen according to the flesh, saying, “My people love to have it so.” The greater delusion which people are accustomed to, they are just all that more afraid to hear or read that

wherein the vice is detected: for a malefactor would be no more afraid to hear or read his endictment, than such are afraid, either to hear or read that in which the delusion is detected, lest they should be undeceived, and convinced of their mistake.

The above is not only incident to one, but to all different sects alike. But he that despiseth instruction, and is afraid of self-evident truths in detecting falsehood, when imposed on the world by priests, for which they artfully ascribe God's authority in support thereof, he, in rejecting inquiry, as in the above, thereby exposeth himself, and declareth his ignorance, and becomes a lasting monument thereof to posterity.

SKETCH XVII.

A Device of Priests to prevent the detecting of Error.

THE next thing to be considered, and what deserves our particular notice, is a device which has long prevailed, not only among the Jews alone, but also among both Protestants and Roman Catholics; and is as follows. Whoever had courage enough to attack and expose the craft and artifice of priests, by witnessing against the errors and corruptions ingrafted on the gospel of Christ, by those of different sects, they not only branded

them with heresy, and as teachers of error, but likewise added thereto as a stigma, the most impious falsehoods of deceit they could possibly devise. And, in order to prevent and deter others from receiving what was, through the influence of these gentlemen, called error, they made the people believe that many wonderful and remarkable judgments, such as the different misfortunes to which we are exposed and liable to in life, were seen on such persons (who attacked the craft of these gentlemen), not only in their lives, but also in their deaths. And though nothing can possibly be more false than many of these reports, they are not only believed, but sustained as facts, by the credulous, the ignorant, and unthinking crowd, unto this day.

Hence, we see from the above, that if any person shall have courage enough to attack the different errors and corruptions ingrafted on the gospel by priests, he may therefore lay his account to be aspersed by these consecrated gentlemen, and their constituents, on account thereof: for when Jesus Christ himself could not escape the epithets thrown out against him by the Jews and Jewish priests, of his being given to gluttony and drunkenness, a friend of publicans and sinners, and the like, those who conform to his precepts, may far less expect to escape than he.

But to this we may add, Was there ever yet a reformer met with the voice of the populace, in his first appearance to the world? No, I apprehend there never was. Impostors, or

such who only change one piece of superstition for another, may chance to, and often, meet with the applause and approbation in what they set forth; but a real or true reformer, who was an enemy to superstition, never did; therefore it would be in vain to expect it now. For men, under the influence of priests, with the devices and craft of said gentlemen, have been the same in all ages; neither need we expect it otherwise now—No, we need not: for if we do, we will certainly meet with a mistake. For, as observed by a certain author, to enterprize any thing out of the common road, is to undergo undoubted envy or peril; and that he who is not beforehand resolved to bear opposition, will never do any great exploit. Yet, it is no small encouragement to me, that from the beginning of the world to this time, not a single instance can be produced, of one who either was, or would be, eminent, but he met with enemies to his person, interest, and fame, on account thereof. But it is a most glorious heroism to contend for, and combat the enemies of, truth, when inseparable from the moral attributes of God,

SKETCH XVIII.

Of the Prejudice of Education.

I Write not to those who despise knowledge, and who, through a prepossession got

through the prejudice of education, are become proof against admonition (except in way of reproof): for I only write to men and creatures of God, capable of cultivation, such as are open to instruction, intended by God (if not resisting his will), they should become men; but such as are born and bred up in a state of slavery, their servitude becomes natural, and they seldom, if ever, desire or wish for a state of freedom: for a prejudice acquired by education, is what blinds the understandings of almost all mankind; but such (though few) as are willing to lay themselves open to instruction, thereby work out, and deliver themselves from the power and dominion thereof. But it is not of people being born and bred up under this or the other system, in a belief of its being right, and conformable to the will of God, that will make it so—No: for if this were the case, every particular system behoved to be, in every respect, just as conformable to truth, and acceptable to the will of God, as another.

But further, since ever I became an enemy to superstition, and not only a sincere friend, but an advocate for truth, I have had the dislike of the world, *viz.* the populace; and might have been left either to beg or starve, for any thing in way of business they could have wished for my support. But thanks be to heaven, and him that dwelleth therein, whose goodness did prevent, and left it not in their power: for, of this we may be certain, that whatever God intends to accomplish or

bring to pass, he still appoints the means, and provides whatever he sees necessary for that purpose. But further, and to proceed,

Some, I apprehend, from a prejudice of education, will, no doubt, be afraid to look into this book, lest being convinced of their mistake, they should be induced to part and give up therewith: for they are like one who becomes heir, and succeeds to an estate by a false conveyance, who is not only afraid, but even trembles, upon hearing of the just heir having recovered the true evidences of said possession, which he himself had kept by fraud. A corrupt or false religion, the corrupters or propagators thereof, are still afraid of its being called in question, and offended at such as would point out the deceit. The above is always the case; for he that possesseth that which is got by stealth, is more afraid thereof, than one who possesseth ever so much by lawful and just gain. Popular belief depends merely upon the received opinion, and not upon truth. Both Mahometans and Roman Catholics, are an incontestable evidence of the above: for if peoples' belief depended upon the veracity of that in which they believe, they could never possibly be afraid of enquiring into the truth of their opinions—No, they never possibly would. But it is a general maxim with the most of people, in whatever sect they are of (to be zealous in what they believe, though ever so absurd) not to read what seems contrary to the received opinion; and thus Mahometans, Roman Catholics, and others

of whatever sect, are continued in whatever they believe as infallible truth. For it is a common maxim with people in every nation, to lay much stress on religion, if established by authority; but to believe and rely thereon, merely on the account of authority, supposes expressly, that if the same authority promulgated a different religion, we would, therefore, be obliged to receive it. But to proceed,

Others again, more from curiosity, than in search of truth, or regard thereto, daring to look therein, and finding what they have long held as sacred being detected for error, and thereby shewn a palpable mistake (it is to be remarked, ignorance believes every thing to be sacred required in that light by the priest; but knowledge believes of nothing being sacred, but that which actually is sacred); nevertheless, though convinced thereof, will perhaps think themselves too old to change or give up with an opinion which they have so long held, though in falsehood. But, can a person be too old to depart from error, when convinced thereof, in order to take hold of truth? No, not possible: for there is nothing more honourable than being open to instruction, especially when for the sake of truth; but it is altogether cowardly, if afraid thereof. Hence, but they who are afraid of what they hold being detected, and will not admit of a candid trial being made thereof, are no better (if not worse) than Mahometans and Roman

Catholics: for neither of which, *viz.* Mahometans and Papists, have opportunity of knowledge; but those who have it in their power, and yet reject the offer, and will not admit of looking thereinto, are incomparably worse than either; therefore more culpable still, and less excusable than they. But to proceed,

Thousands, I apprehend, will, no doubt, be afraid to read or search into these volumes, lest they shall be induced to give up with their refuge of lies, to which they are infinitely more indulged, than to truth itself, though certain they were possessed of it. For instance, see Micah, when dispossessed of his idols by the Danites, he cries out like one dispossessed of his all, saying, "They have taken away my gods, and what have I more?" So, many, in finding the falsehoods, the errors, and deceit, attacked, in which they believe for truth, and repose their trust, will, no doubt, like Micah, cry out, saying, They have taken away my all, *viz.* my gods, and what have I more? But if such, as here observed, shall dare to read, and be convinced of their mistake, they will, no doubt, be ashamed of their having lived so long in darkness; therefore, not dare retract. But to such, if they should have lived forty, fifty, or even sixty years, under some grievous complaint which would produce inevitable death at last, would they be ashamed to apply and accept of a remedy for their recovery? No, I apprehend not.

Hence, if they are not ashamed to apply for health, they need, in every respect, be as

little ashamed to take hold of truth. But, in one word, whatever religious opinions people are accustomed to, though ever so absurd, yea, though it were to serve or worship the devil, they would actually think it strange to change or depart from it: for it is neither on truth, nor regard thereto, on which men, *viz.* the populace, found and hold their religious opinions; but merely from custom, habit, and repute. But further, and to proceed,

Many will, no doubt, not only be afraid to read, but even to look into the contents or pages of this book, lest being convinced of their error, they should be induced, from truth, to give up therewith. Yet, however self-evident and convincing the contents of this publication may prove, I much doubt, but the pride of many, though convinced of the justness of which, will prevent them either to acknowledge or comply with it. For some people, as observed by Seneca, scorn to be taught, and others are ashamed of it, lest they should thereby expose their own weakness. For no person likes to be thought ignorant of what they profess, though ever so absurd and contrary to truth: but such as neglect being friends thereto, will, no doubt, be looked back upon by those in after ages with disgrace.

Further, others again, in reading thereof, will likewise object, saying, Could he not rather have given us a piece of devout or pious composition? But, in answer to such, if you saw a person caught in a trap, would you not

first make it your study to relieve him from thence, before you came to apply salves to the wounds he had received by the snare in which he was caught? Certainly. But some, I apprehend, would rather chuse to die in their wounds, before they came to suffer or endure the pain in pulling out the instrument, or cause of their complaint. But, upon the whole, I have not only endeavoured to relieve from the snare, but have likewise applied medicinal salves for their recovery. From hence, and to proceed,

I put no doubt, but that even thousands of such as are open to instruction in reading over the different volumes of this book, will certainly be convinced of the justness of what is contained therein; but (though convinced) will not for the sake of their families (for fear of being thought strange, or odd in society, by those among whom they live, and thereby affect their bread or worldly interest) dare, if not independent of the above, express themselves, nor declare their minds concerning it—No. But let such remember that which is expressed by Jesus Christ, concerning the truth and veracity of the gospel; “He that loveth father or mother, sister or brother, wife or children, houses or lands, more than me,” viz. the truth, “is not worthy of me.” So, he that loveth any thing in the world more than truth, hath neither part nor lot therein.

Having observed as in the above, I shall, therefore, proceed as follows. However much

the different volumes of this book may, on its first approach into the world, be despised, reprobated, and set at naught (by such as are the select friends, allies, and near kinsmen of the beast, and such as adhere and are related thereto), it will, as reported of Aaron's (or rather Moses') rod swallowing up the rods of the magicians, likewise devour, and thereby swallow up, all of its different enemies at last. But to proceed in pursuance of which,

Though the variety contained in this system should (in its first coming into the world, as observed in the above) be looked upon by the populace, the ignorant, and unthinking crowd, as gross and dangerous heresies, the time is fast approaching, that they who first embrace and take hold thereof, will be looked back upon with reverence, and of the highest esteem; even in such a light, as if no person would admit and give place to understanding but they; and the enemies thereof as fools, as a people of no knowledge, with whom neither justice, judgment, nor understanding, could possibly dwell, or be found to lodge. Yea, the time is fast approaching, when every one will hasten to take hold thereof before another, save a few, namely, those who are, as observed in the above, the allies, near relations, and kinsmen of the beast, who are afraid to desert their harlot mother.

From this, I do not suppose that every person who is convinced of the truth and justness thereof will comply with it—No: for thousands may, indeed, be convinced of the just-

ness of the above, who, from a selfish view in keeping themselves under cover, in order that they may the easier outwit, ensnare, and thereby deceive and take the advantage of their neighbours. But these, and such as these, are by no means to be coveted or wished for—No, they are not.

SKETCH XIX.

An Answer required by the Author of such as are his Antagonists.

I KNOW nothing in this world more divided than truth; at least what they call so. All sects maintain they have it. Every different persuasion, not only claim, but assert of truth being with them, distinct from every other sect: but alas! too many of whom appear, from what they maintain, to be almost, if not altogether, ignorant thereof. But truth needs no assertions; for she always bears her own evidence along with her. I know, indeed, such as propagate false, or absurd doctrines, never fail to establish the authority thereof by the strongest assertions; but truth needs no assertions—No: for truth always proves itself independent thereof; but false or absurd doctrines have nothing else to depend upon than the above, *viz.* bare assertion; which, when applied to, is no less than a downright affront to truth, if used in support thereof.

Further, it is therefore to be remarked, that a judicious person, *viz.* one of understanding, will maintain truth, though from no other motives than for truth's sake; but no person will maintain falsehood or error, but only either from ignorance, *viz.* the want of judgment, or for the sake of reward; though too often more from prejudice than either. Hence, truth is oft-times wounded in the house of her pretended friends, but not by those whom they call her enemies. The greatest foes to truth are those who dress her up under the colour of error; on which they raise the hue and cry against her. But truth, though used as in the above, is never afraid of error; but error even trembles upon the most distant hearing of truth. Gospel truths, though none more abused and misunderstood, are never afraid to be attacked; but error, when ingrafted thereon by the adulterous and bastard breed of the great whore, even trembles (as has been observed) at the most distant hearing of truth; and under colour as in the above, gives the alarm, and cries out, The church is in danger! Error, I acknowledge, may be in danger; but truth, if used according to justice, never possibly can. But to proceed, (mark this),

As truth can never possibly be but on one side, let us, therefore, not fall out in what they call opinion about matters of belief, or articles of faith; but let you, mine accusers and antagonists, overturn, if in your power, these my arguments agreeable to truth. Yea, I require it of you to overturn them, if in

your power, that, if wrong, I may therefore be convinced of my error, give up therewith, and come over to you. And if not in your power to answer and overturn these my arguments according to truth, I require of you, before God, angels, and men, to give up with your error, and come over to me. Yea, I require of you an answer as in the above: for if you shall be silent and not answer, or unable to answer according to truth, and yet retain your error, and not give up therewith and come over to me, you may depend on it, that this will be a swift and a heavy witness against you in your condemnation before God, whether you believe it or not; for you may assuredly depend on it, that God is certainly one who will neither be trifled nor dallied with. Tremble, therefore, and be afraid, all you that believe in falsehood and deceit, namely, in whatever is contrary to the moral attributes of God! for he will by no means be mocked by the sons or children of men—No, he will not.

But further, if the arguments stated on the different subjects in this publication do not prove the reality of that which they imply, I shall by no means plead in their behalf: or if any person will give stronger reasons, or better arguments thereon, I shall heartily submit; but till then, I can by no means give up. Or, if these, my antagonists, have it in their power to answer the arguments expressed on these different subjects, agreeable to truth, let them do it; and if not able, Why should

I depart therefrom, to comply with what they themselves cannot prove? Hence, or if it is in the power of Christendom to refute or overturn the above system by rational arguments, let them do it without delay, that, if wrong, I may therefore be convinced of my mistake. But if not in the power thereof to overturn it, I must certainly suppose myself in the right; and therefore will abide as I am.

Now therefore, if in the power of the above to answer according to truth, I require an immediate return; but to this I know your reply, which is, You can have no other answer from us than this, we are all perfectly in the right, and whatever is opposite thereto is wrong. But, in return to which, a bare assertion indeed; but assertion, though ever so positive, is neither answer nor argument—No. For instance, if you should say that all things were created by God, you are certainly right; but if I should assert, that each thereof took being of itself, independent of God, Will my assertion convert this falsehood into an incontestable truth? No, certainly not.

ANTAGONIST, In answer to yours, that is all granted; but, in one word, our fathers (like the Samaritans) worshipped in this mountain, and so will we.

GEN. Yes; that I verily believe, that if your fathers had been Pagans, Mahometans, or Roman Catholics, so would ye. And it is not on account of the absurdity of either that you are not of such, but lack of opportunity

of your not being bred up therein: for scarce one of a thousand take their religious opinions from truth (or dare enquire into the foundation thereof), but merely from custom, *viz.* antiquity, if the established belief of their ignorant ancestors, though ever so absurd. But the greatest loss is, people (concerning their religious opinions), from a belief of their being the real appointment of God, dare not therefore bring them to a trial or test of an impartial examination; but would even thereby suppose themselves culpable to admit they stood in need thereof.

AN. A heavy accusation indeed!

GEN. Yes; but I suppose no heavier, if no reply is made thereto and answered according to truth, than what is really just: for you actually suppress knowledge in the condemnation of truth, by refusing an impartial inquiry thereinto, in forbidding people to believe contrary to what you require. And not only this, but anathematize and send to hell (which indeed is the sure mark of the beast) all such as misbelieve, and will not receive what you require, though ever so absurd and inconsistent with the moral attributes of God. Hence, but I, on the contrary, invite every person to try if any thing in said book (expressed in condemnation of what is required by you, my antagonists) is inconsistent with the above test, *viz.* the moral attributes of God, and desire no person, either to receive or believe therein, any farther than conformable thereunto; I mean the above test. And also, I leave every

person at liberty, after having weighed and compared your system and mine with each other, to receive it or not. For, as observed by a certain author, "We are too apt to embrace opinions without examining them; and more especially religious opinions and dogmas, which, above all others, should be brought to the bar of reason, for a candid, a fair, and impartial trial, before they are adopted; because reason is, above all others, the best and infallible test, for to prove the truth of religious opinions."

Now, therefore, let every one try and be satisfied in their belief; and if it is in the power of Christendom to overturn this system (or subjects contained therein), by sound and rational arguments, from what is expressed in the gospel taught by Jesus Christ, let them do it: but if they take upon them to condemn it, when out of their power to overturn, it this tells you expressly whose children they are. But to proceed,

This I verily believe, you are never at a loss; for what you want of truth in support of argument, you supply by assertion, and thereby condemn every one that will not believe what you assert for truth. But without proof, your assertions are altogether vain, and must therefore go for naught: for he that deals in falsehoods, must, of necessity, use assertion instead of evidence; for assertion is easily attained or come by, where no evidence can possibly be produced.

From hence, I know the exprefs wish of you, my antagonists, against this book, is the same with the devil against Jesus Christ. The devil, because unable to withstand his arguments, put him to death: you, in like manner, because unable to answer or make returns thereto according to truth, would wish to destroy it. For truth never yet made its appearance in any nation, but was always deemed, in its first approach, as a very great and dangerous heresy, especially with the priests and their constituents: witness the gospel, and every thing that tendeth in support thereof.

But further, Why do you accuse, and thereby condemn, that which you cannot answer? In this you actually condemn yourself; and not that, or even those, whom you attempt to accuse. For instance, in what light would a judge appear, if he should pass sentence against a panel, upon an indictment which he could not prove, and was altogether ignorant of the justice or injustice thereof? Would not the condemnation of said panel be therefore unjust?

AN. Yes; not only unjust, as in the above, but even murder in cold blood.

GEN. As in the former, so does every one who condemns his neighbour in that which he himself cannot answer: for he that condemns another in what he himself cannot solve, or make answer thereto, is actually a fool, who, for want of judgment, cannot so much as co-

ver or conceal his own ignorance, in that by which he exposes himself.

From hence, I am quite sensible you want to make the world believe that I am in an error, and would lightly (to get rid thereof) persuade men, that my arguments deserve no reply; but if I am wrong, or have erred in what I have advanced, it will be the easier for you, my antagonists, to make answer thereto. And if you should proceed to condemn my arguments, if not able to overturn them according to truth, you only thereby openly declare yourselves upon the devil's side, and against God, in whose cause I have embarked. And, if I have not express myself conformable to the moral attributes of God, believe me not; but if conformable thereto, I require of you to believe me for his Attributes' sake.

AN. However much fact may be upon your side, there are but few, I apprehend, will admit or believe therein.

GEN. That I will not refuse; for it is only the sensible or thinking few, that are not proof against, but open to instruction, that can either profit, reap advantage, or be delivered from ruin: for the ignorant, from lack of knowledge, are incapable either to see or be afraid of danger, or accept of deliverance when set before them. For instance, if a ship should strike upon a rock and begin to sink, such therein as are sensible of their danger, use every means of escape, while others, who, for want of judgment, have not so much sense as take hold of a plank in order to swim ashore,

must, therefore, certainly perish and go down along with the broken vessel, on which they, from ignorance, rely.

But further, in respect to what you observe of peoples' not believing in what is here expressed, when the gospel was taught by Christ among the Jews, because few believed therein, Was that a proof of its invalidity? or, Was the gospel any thing the worse? or, Was there less truth upon its side, because despised, rejected, and set at naught by that people?

AN. No, certainly not.

GEN. Neither will what is here contained in these volumes, though despised, be less valuable or true, because believed and received by a few, and rejected, like the gospel, as vain and unprofitable, by the populace and unthinking crowd, who are swayed only by prejudice, and not by truth. But truth, however despised and set at naught, is the mistress and original parent of what we may call true and sound philosophy; and for her sake, we dare, with confidence, run the risk of that contempt which commonly attends singularity of opinion, in differing from the credulous, the ignorant, and unthinking multitude. But to return,

Nor is this all—No: for ignorance in the real knowledge of God, is, in every respect, as much esteemed by priests and their constituents, as if a premium should be offered, or reward annexed thereto for its encouragement. Nor is this disgraceful infatuation subject only to those of the present century—No; for know-

ledge has, in all ages, had many enemies; but ignorance, or lack of judgment in the laity, is the happiness and advantage of priests. For these gentlemen, namely the superstitious, whose desire is to make slaves of the souls of men, in order to shew their importance, require of such as attend on their harangues, to believe in what is exprest therein, under pain of inevitable damnation. And thus they, *viz.* the above gentlemen, by putting on a grimace under a mask of profound piety, with that of an uncommon shew of devotion, deceive the ignorant; and thereby rob the world, by tricking the people, not only out of their judgment, but even also out of their all, *viz.* both of their souls and silver. In all of which, I have exprest no more, than fully shewn the meaning, nature, and design of the gospel taught by Jesus Christ, its great and illustrious founder, by which it was delivered to us agreeable to the will of God. And if any person has a mind to take part with me in said system, conformable to the above, he has free leave and welcome; and if not, he may please himself in what he thinks more conformable to the will of God; but agreeable to his moral and divine attributes, I apprehend there is not.

Lastly, And to conclude this sketch; in all this, I have done nothing more than what is my indispensable duty; nor could I have acquitted myself to God in neglect thereof; nor have I, to the utmost of my knowledge, deviated, in any one part of the whole, from that divine test, *viz.* the moral attributes of

God—No, I apprehend I have not. And not only this, but I may say with safety, that there is nothing herein, but what I have received, in one respect or other, from God, from whom alone we receive every good and perfect gift; and to whom I, therefore, hold and acknowledge myself inexpressibly indebted, who, out of his abundant goodness, has given unto me (if no return is made thereto conformable to the above test) more than all those mine enemies can justly answer, if not answered according to truth, as required in the foregoing, conformable to said test, *viz.* the moral attributes of God. From which, he, as being unchangeably the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever, can never possibly swerve, deviate, or turn aside.

AN. Permit me as follows. Though you, I acknowledge, have, no doubt, exerted your talents in an uncommon degree for the glory of God and the good of men, yet many, I apprehend, will believe you are acting not only against, but to the hurt of the gospel.

GEN. Yes; the prejudiced, the ignorant, the unthinking crowd, and superstitious devotee, with others of like nature, no doubt, will; but I, in exposing and cutting down the many, the most horrid, and abominable corruptions ingrafted on the gospel by priests of all denominations for the space of seventeen hundred years past, have done more for the deliverance of Christ's religion, than all the clergy in Christendom, within the limites of said period, have

done, or ever will do, while acting in opposition to despised and forlorn truth.

AN. But if the gospel be so wofully corrupted and abused by priests, Why but the clergy may again expunge it of these adulterations, by preaching up the pure simplicity thereof?

GEN. Though priests of every denomination in Christendom, should, from a judicious principle, preach up the pure simplicity of the gospel, independent of said adulterations, I much doubt, but a rascally set would again immediately step forth and teach the contrary, merely for the sake of bread.

SKETCH XX.

That the Gospel is a Republication of the Law of Reason and Religion of Nature, made evident.

HAVING stript and divested the gospel, not only of Judaism, but also of the different corruptions ingrafted thereon (in virtue of the Mosaic system or institution, viz. Judaism) by ignorant, self-interested, and designing men, I shall therefore proceed, with the following observation thereon by a certain author.

“ Whatever frail, fallible men may do, or whatever any church, or collected body of men, may do, a God of infinite wisdom and mercy will not, nay, cannot require of us, in

belief or practice, more than in proportion to the abilities and powers which he hath given and endued us with. In pursuing of this subject, I have endeavoured, for the honour of christianity, to divest it of the mask with which bigotry and enthusiasm have disguised it; and to defend it on principles of reason, its best and surest defence. And also, I have laboured to prove, and I hope I have proved, that the religion taught by Jesus Christ and his apostles was the religion of nature; and that it is consonant to reason, and to our most approved conceptions of the divine nature. The eternal God, whom I humbly adore, knows that I have employed the faculties he hath given me, in an honest and impartial inquiry after the truth as it is in him. If it be elevated above the reach of these faculties, I must remain in ignorance; but I cannot, on that account, be the object of God's displeasure. I know that I am fallible, and liable to error; I therefore dictate to none, but earnestly recommend to every man to judge for himself, and to listen to the dictates of his own conscience, in its acting conformable to reason. But to proceed,

It appears to me that nature and conscience dictate and discover to us the relations we stand in to God and to our fellow creatures; and reason points out the duties which flow from these relations. Now, these duties appear to be piety towards God, and universal charity and benevolence towards mankind. From the performance of these duties will arise

our happiness; and therefore, it farther appears, that the love of God, and of our fellow creatures, are inseparably connected with the first and most evident principle of nature, the love of ourselves. All these seem to be interwoven with our very frame by the Author of our being.

From hence it follows, the moral doctrines and precepts of Christ and his apostles, appear to me to be a fair and perfect transcript of this divine original; and therefore, I stile these, and these only, the religion of Christ, *viz.* christianity. And for this reason also, I look on it to be the only true, written revelation of God's will to mankind, among all the various revelations, or what are so called, in the world.

Further, I am sensible that the advocates of every other religion make the same pretensions; but I deny that any I am yet acquainted with, have equal proof of the divinity of their system, with the votaries of the moral doctrines and precepts of Jesus Christ. But here I would be understood, not to take into this account those who profess only the religion of nature, who practise the duties prescribed by their own consciences, conformable to the gospel of Christ, and have not joined themselves to any particular communion: these cannot be wrong if they are sincere; because conscience, when acting conformable to the law and religion of nature republished by Jesus Christ, will always be a safe and unerring

guide in all religious concerns; and reason, "The only proper test of religious truth."

But, let us examine this matter a little farther, and then conclude.

The advocates of every sect allow that there is but one true religion in the world; and notwithstanding that such an assertion reflects highly on the justice and goodness of the Supreme Being, they still assert, that theirs is this true religion, and that they only are in possession of this invaluable jewel, this pearl of great price.

Now, if it be allowed that there is but one true religion intended by God for universal use, it certainly is the principal business of every one to find it out, and embrace it; but, in order to do this, and to distinguish the gold from the dross, we should candidly, and in a most impartial manner, examine the pretensions of every religious sect throughout the known world: a task extremely difficult, if not impossible, to be performed; and therefore, I presume, was never attempted. There are very few who have had the ability and the opportunity of examining amongst the almost numberless religious systems which have obtained in this world; however, those within our reach, it certainly is our duty to examine. But, before we begin such an important inquiry, it will be necessary to do two things. First, to divest ourselves, as much as possible, of any prejudices we may have imbibed from the religion we were educated in, that we may examine the religion of our own country, with

the same candour and impartiality with which we examine that of others. Next, we should fix in our own minds some certain marks or characteristics of a true religion: for without previously doing these two things, our examination will be useless, and not answer the purpose intended by it.

We begin then, and, in order to collect all the assistance we can, we extend our inquiries to the professors of each religion; and we soon find, that they all pretend to the seal of heaven, the certain criterion of a religion's coming from God, and that all others are false and counterfeit. And what is worthy of remark, the principal and distinguishing characteristics of divinity in almost all of them, we find to be that of miracles, or histories of miracles, which will ever be an insufficient proof of the truth of any religion; especially if we consider that God is said sometimes to have permitted miracles to be wrought, even by the agency of evil spirits.

Still remaining in doubt and uncertainty, and finding the face of the earth overspread, like a deluge, with ignorance, superstition, enthusiasm, bigotry, priest-craft, and self-interest, we return, like the dove into the ark, without finding where to rest the soles of our feet. From without, we gain no information in regard to this important inquiry: for our guides, either know not the way themselves, or refuse to lead others into it.

Being thus come back again to the place from whence we set out, we naturally reason

with ourselves in this manner. If God hath given a religion to mankind to be the universal rule of their conduct, and if no individual can attain eternal happiness without knowing and embracing it, surely it is the business of every man to examine and judge for himself, and not one for another; because no one can become accountable for the opinions and actions of another, nor indeed would take them on himself, if able so to do. besides, it would be a more trifling excuse to say, 'My priest told me I should do this, and I did it,' than that made by Adam for his eating the forbidden fruit. What can we, then, conclude, but that if there is any certain, unerring, heaven-appointed guide to man, it must be his own conscience? Let us commune, then, with our own hearts, and be still: let us cease our inquiries from men, who are all, like ourselves, liable to error: let us depend no longer upon the opinions of others, but open the book of nature, read the page there presented to us conformable to the gospel of Christ, and drink of the pure stream from the fountain of truth, uncorrupted with superstition, ignorance, bigotry, or interested craft: let us turn our thoughts inward, and ask ourselves seriously, whether it be probable that God hath given to mankind any written revelation immediately from himself, and under his special and particular direction, in doing which, he effectually restrained the publishers of it from blending any of their own opinions and sentiments with the pure and perfect word

thus delivered to them? Will not our consciences answer, That it is highly probable no such written religion has been made? And for this reason, among many others, namely, that such a revelation must be necessary to the happiness of mankind, or God would not have made it. If necessary for any, then for all; and if inconsistent with all our ideas of the justice and goodness of the Parent of mankind, to suppose that he would not make it universal, it would therefore be a reflection on the moral character of the Deity, to suppose one individual of the human race to be so unhappily circumstanced, as to have no opportunity of knowing and embracing the only religion by which he could attain eternal happiness.

But further, if such a revelation had been made to mankind, it would, most certainly, have been distinguished from all pretended revelations, by some obvious external marks and tokens of a divine original, not by a pillar of fire or of smoke to direct one nation only, but such as would attract the notice, and fix the opinions of mankind universally; and be to them all an infallible and unerring guide, through the wilderness of this world, to a state of perfect and consummate happiness.

Hence, such a revelation would also, most certainly, have some internal mark of its divinity. We may reasonably suppose, first, that it would be plain, clear, intelligible, suited to all situations of time and place, and to the meanest, as well as the most enlarged capacity. It would

want no comments, no paraphrases, no explanations; for can we suppose, that when God speaks to his creatures, he would do it in a language which they could not understand? or, that he who formed the power of conception in the human mind, should ever stand in need of an interpreter? Surely no. It may be objected thus, if revealed to one nation, they would communicate it to another, in after ages. But, in answer to said objection, if the souls of such were supposed worth being saved in after ages, they had certainly, in every respect, as much need to be saved in the former as in the latter. But, secondly, we may reasonably suppose, that the doctrines of such a revelation would be pure, unmixed with perplexing mysteries, or useless ceremonies; and that its precepts would contain the most sublime morality; the practice of which would have a direct tendency to promote universal happiness. And, finally, such a religion would most certainly approve itself to the consciences of every individual of the human race, by being a perfect copy from that perfect original, the law of reason, *viz.* the religion of nature, to which nothing can possibly be added by man that would improve it; nothing blended with it, but what would prove an alloy, and lessen its intrinsic value.

The religion of nature republished by Jesus Christ, is the standard by which we should measure the merits of all other religions; and that which approaches nearest to the purity and perfection of this religion which comes

from God, we should, therefore, esteem the best: and if we look on established religion as useful, political, and productive of order in society, we should, if for the sake of example, only join ourselves to that which our consciences thus recommend. But to this it may be further objected, if the religion of nature be such a perfect standard, as express in the above, How come the nations which have no revelation to be so much degenerated therefrom? In answer to which objection, they were corrupted by the priests, *viz.* self-interested and designing men:

From hence, it appears that the religion of Christ, unadulterated, has the fairest claim to our regard upon the principles before established; but, by the religion of Christ, I would always be understood to mean his moral doctrines and precepts; and therefore, I earnestly recommend that we make use of our reason to distinguish those parts of christianity which are agreeable to nature, and to what God has written in our hearts, from those parts, which, for many reasons given in these sheets, must be the inventions of men, whatever may be required of us by priests to believe concerning them. The moral doctrines and precepts of Christ are exactly such as what nature teaches; such as my conscience approves; and therefore, I prefer Christ's religion, which is a republication of the law and religion of nature which came from God, and is wrote in the heart of every human soul, in his own language; therefore, need not apply to any o-

ther established religion that I am acquainted with.

Hence, I reverence the character and doctrines of Jesus Christ, and endeavour to practise his precepts; because my conscience tells me that they are reasonable, and productive of human felicity: and for this reason, I denominate myself a rational christian, conformable to the pure and unadulterated doctrines of the gospel taught by Jesus Christ.

P O S T S C R I P T.

THE Author of these sheets supposes all along, that the religion of Christ is to be learned from our present English translation of the New Testament; and therefore, should any person think it worth while, by way of finding fault, to tell him that he has mistaken the sense of various passages from his want of a competent knowledge of the Greek language, it will certainly appear to be a reflection on the copiers and translators of this divine volume, *viz.* the New Testament; but not an answer to, or reflection on his work. And to such persons no other reply is necessary, or will be made, than this, namely, if the translation be really so defective that a mere English reader cannot learn his duty from it, Why have we not a better? If it should be said further, that the true spirit and meaning of the original cannot be carried in-

to the English tongue, it would be like asserting, that the New Testament was the word of God in Greek, but that we cannot have it so in English. This carries the reflection still higher, and cannot deserve any reply at all.

Hence, but though it shall be alledged, that the scriptures cannot be understood in the English tongue, Is this any just cause of reflection? No, by no means, as is evident from what follows. For even the priests themselves, who pretend to be perfectly acquainted, and even proficient in knowing the languages, are entirely divided in their explanations of both the Old and New Testament: for in many passages, such as consist of what they call mystery and supernatural, or rather super-rational doctrines, they, *viz.* priests, oft-times, in most express terms, contradict one another in their explanations thereon. Now, since those who pretend to be adepts in the original languages are so much divided in the meaning and explanations of such passages, as to contradict one another in the meaning and explanations thereof, How can I, or any other person possessed of the rational faculties bestowed thereon of God, believe of such and such passages, and doctrines built thereon by men, who are so much divided in the sense or meaning of such and such passages, and doctrines built thereon, having come from God? Hence, is it possible that God would reveal, or give to man for his good, that in which all, both learned and unlearned, disagree (whatever they may pretend to in the knowledge there-

of) and are altogether ignorant of? No, not possible.

Further, I say, Is it possible of such and such passages having come from God for the good of men, wherein the learned themselves (for seventeen hundred years past) are so much divided in the sense and meaning of such and such in their explanations, and thereby contradict each other (by which disagreement, they, as it were in express terms, declare their own ignorance, in what they falsely pretend to the knowledge of, *viz.* of these mysteries)? No, not possible.

Now, when priests themselves are so much divided in their explanations of scripture, as to explain texts contrary to one another, how can we, with safety, rely thereon for truth?

Hence, a revelation of which men are so much ignorant of as in the above, can never possibly profit man, neither in this world (except priests), nor in that which is to come—No. And if not profitable to man in what they pretend, it can be nothing more than a deceit, a counterfeit, or mock revelation. Now, to require a belief in that about which the learned themselves are so much divided in the meaning thereof, is no less than a downright insult upon the judgments and understandings of men. I repeat it again, for priests to require a belief of such passages having come from God, in the meaning of which they are so much divided, is no less than a downright insult upon the judgments and understandings of men.

From hence, though a belief in such and such mysteries, super-rational doctrines, and propositions, about which priests themselves are so much divided, be required and imposed upon the understandings of men, they would require to be as ignorant, if we may so speak, as the brutes that perish, before they can possibly either assign, admit, or believe therein for truth: for no person can possibly believe in such and such, though required by priests, without first divesting himself of the powers he has received from God; and thereby put himself on a level with the above. But, for man to believe in, or rest his salvation on such mysteries, about which men are so much disagreed in the meaning thereof, is, in every respect, just as unsafe as to convey himself into a deep pit, or from the top of a high precipice, by a fictitious or an imaginary rope. Hence, both of which dreams will be found of a piece at last: for I tell you of a truth, that for men to believe in that which nature can never possibly teach, nor reason comprehend, *viz.* that of mystery and super-rational doctrines built thereon by priests, contrary to reason, altogether incapable either to influence the practice, or enlighten the understandings of men (therefore unprofitable), is, in express terms, to believe in nothing at all; and he that believes in a phantom, a mere fiction, *viz.* nothing, can inevitably reap nothing therefrom but deceit. Hence, and it is only by priests requiring a belief in what they call mystery, *viz.* priestcraft, or intelligible

doctrines, and of men submitting thereto, by which all nations, tongues, people, and languages, have been corrupted, as they now are, in a more or less degree.

And further, by priests, people are made to believe they cannot know the gospel, *viz.* the scripture, in their own language, without they explain them; but, if not known therein, to what purpose are our translations? and if not known till explained from the original, our translations are altogether vain; therefore, might have been continued in the original till explained therefrom by the priests.

But further, if these priests who translated the gospel or scriptures to us, are not to be trusted to in the knowledge thereof, by what means can we trust them who pretend to explain them from the original, more than the former, by whom they were translated at first? Vain talking, indeed! and by people giving heed to such idle jargon, millions are stolen out of their judgment; and thereby reduced to what we, in express words, may call beasts of burden, in comparison to those who retain the use of their rational powers, and are not robbed thereof by priests.

And further, I shall add as follows. St. Chrysostom thinks religion so very plain, that, he says, "Were it not for our sloth, we had no need of teachers." And we do not find that even the fathers thought the people, as not being able to judge for themselves, were to believe in their parish priest. Now, if no need of teachers in these early ages of christia-

nity, far less now, when every person may read and learn therefrom his express duty to both God and man.

Hence, but the fault of the people, even from the beginning, has been, as observed by the memorable Mr. Hales, that "They, *viz.* the people, through sloth and blind obedience, examined not the things they were taught; but, like beasts of burden, patiently couched down, and indifferently underwent whatever their superiors laid upon them." But St. Basil tells us, "It is the duty of auditors not to believe implicitly, but to examine the words of those that instruct them." And Lactantius says, "That in those things, especially which concern our life eternal, it becomes every man to search and examine the truth of them by his own sense and judgment, rather than to expose himself, by a foolish credulity, to the hazard of being seduced into other mens errors." But to return,

If the New Testament is, or has been, carefully translated into the language of a country, every person therein may certainly read in his own language, and learn his duty from its moral precepts, so far as necessarily required and taught therein by Jesus Christ for our salvation.

Lastly, Before I conclude this Postscript, I shall therefore just barely observe as follows. It is the desire of you antirational priests (and your constituents), the great standards of (what may be called a speculative or nominal) orthodoxy, by whom the world is kept in

darkness, and by whom the gospel is suppressed, wrapt up, and thereby hid from the knowledge of the laity, through the priestly sagacity and artifice of your pretended mysteries ingrafted thereon; by which it (*viz.* the gospel) has been prevented from being diffused abroad into the minds of the people; and, by virtue of which, ignorance is propagated, to the extirpation of knowledge, and thereby strictly prohibited under pain of expelling every one who shall attempt to contribute to her relief, or take off the mask (like a certain author) under which she has been so long concealed.

It has been said, that he who has taken upon him to recall her from exile in support of truth, by writing and publishing, independent of your authority, his Essays, moral and divine, to the prejudice and hurt of your empire, *viz.* ignorance, shall therefore recant, and turn to your alliance: but, it is therefore now expected, that the sum of what is contained in these volumes, will be sustained by you, so far as necessary, for whatever was formerly thought amiss; and if I have erred in any one thing contained herein, I shall be happy, as observed elsewhere, to be convinced of my mistake. I am,

GENTLEMEN,

Your sincere and hearty Wellwisher,

M. D E. G.

A GENTILE CHRISTIAN.

T H E

S U P P L E M E N T.

*Observations and Reflections upon a Publication,
entitled, An Inquiry into the Causes of the In-
fidelity and Scepticism of the Times.*

THE real and just cause of the infidelity and scepticism, so much complained and talked of, is as follows.

1. By the ingrafting of Judaism and Jewish history (a system pregnant with the most palpable, most horrid, and the grossest of contradictions) on the gospel of Christ, with many other wild, superstitious, and enthusiastic adulterations, diametrically opposite to the moral attributes of God; by which means, they are set at enmity, and thereby made to contradict and confound each other. Thus, the ingrafting of Judaism on christianity, as if it stood in need of or depended thereon, is not only to injure the gospel, but would bring Paganism itself, if applied in support thereof, to perpetual disgrace. These, with others of like nature, for which they have most wantonly ascribed God's authority, are some of the express causes of the infidelity and scepticism of the times, so much complained of in the above.

2. And also, by the rejecting of morality, good works, or gospel duties, *viz.* the moral precepts taught by Jesus Christ and his apostles, as altogether unprofitable and obnoxious in the sight of God.

3. And likewise, by depreciating of human nature; the vilifying and declaiming against reason, which may justly be stiled the voice of God; the despisers of which deserve to be expelled the society of men, and to be sent, like Nebuchadnezzar, to graze with the brutal tribes.

4. And also, by the requiring of people to believe in Judaism, after abolished by the apostles through the direction of the Holy Spirit.

5. And also, by saying, that though God is immutable and changeth not, yet he, because sovereign, may therefore command one thing to-day, and an express contrary to-morrow.

Hence, of all infidelities under heaven, these being express in dishonour of the eternal God, with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning, are certainly the worst. These few, for which they have ascribed God's authority, with others of like nature, wherein God is made appear to contradict and thereby confound himself, are the express causes of the much talked and complained of infidelity and scepticism of the times.

But further, and to proceed unto the particulars of said inquiry concerning the infidelity and scepticism of the times, to the hurt

of what they call revealed religion (though a great part of what goes under that name is nothing more than merely pretended). The reason why it is thought superior to the religion of nature, is, their confidently believing, through the persuasion of priests (on whom it depends) of its having come from God. But the religion of nature, which proceeds from God, having no priests, by reason of its bringing little or nothing in support of the priesthood, is therefore slighted, despised, and set at naught by said gentlemen, as unsafe to be trusted to in our acceptance with God. But the difference betwixt natural, and a great part of revealed religion, *viz.* that of priests, is, in every respect, as great as between the authors on whom they depend: for in the religion of nature are no contradictions; but God, in a great part of what is said to be revealed, and for which they ascribe his authority, is oft-times made appear to contradict and thereby confound himself; which can never possibly, as being immutable, be the case with God—No; because he changeth not.

And further, revealed religion is supported merely by those under pay; but natural, by none but volunteers, who are under no temporary reward. But, if revealed religion brought as little gain in support of the priesthood, and natural as much as by the revealed, I much doubt but the natural, whose author is God, would become triumphant; and the revealed, the greatest part thereof depending

merely upon men, would be altogether excluded as unprofitable for our acceptance with God. But the natural, by yielding no pay, is therefore altogether debased and set at naught, as in the above; but revealed religion being highly exalted and dunned into the ears of the people by such as depend thereon, is applauded by them as being the great and mighty power of God.

Further, but if the author of said inquiry had circumscribed himself unto the moral precepts of the gospel, which are an express transcript of the law and religion of nature, republished and taught by Jesus Christ, he had certainly prevailed; but his plan is by far too general: for it will admit of both Mahometanism and Roman Catholicism, the same as pure and upright christianity.

But further, with respect to revelation, a great part of what goes under the name of revealed religion, is much of a piece with our acts of parliament, obscure, intricate, and inexplicable, not intended to be understood till explained by a lawyer, or composers thereof. Similar to which, a great part of revelation, *viz.* the religion of priests, being so intricate, mysterious, and obscure, as in the above, not intended to be understood by the common people, are therefore made believe we cannot possibly understand revelation, except explained to us by these gentlemen, *viz.* priests, the composers of which, as in the foregoing. Thus far, I acknowledge, priests are, no doubt, best acquainted with their own obscurities;

but the religion of nature is so simple, plain, and easy, that no person, though of the meanest capacity, if not a fool, can possibly escape perceiving his duty. But, in order to dissuade people against the above, we are told there could be no certain hope for us without revelation, nor could the law of reason, *viz.* nature, be of the same effect independent thereof. But, in answer to which, the Alcoran itself, however absurd in its doctrines, Mahometans have, in every respect, as much confidence therein, as either Jews or christians have in what they believe; and when zealously pressed home on the minds of that people, has such an effect on their morals, that christians may be ashamed when compared with them in the duties of life.

And further, let the principles of natural religion, conformable to Jesus Christ, and advantages thereof, be as fervently pressed home on the minds of the people as the revealed, and it will even become superior in reforming the lives of men; but while thus neglected, despised, and set at naught, as unprofitable in the sight of God, can never possibly prevail nor overcome the dreadful clamours of its different enemies. Hence, the law of reason, or religion of nature, lies latent in the heart of every human soul, longing to be cultivated by every one who is pleased to attend thereon. But to proceed,

The motives they alledge, from whence many act in pursuit of natural religion, is from a love of novelty, and of being thought

singular in opinion. But, in answer to the above accusation, it can never be novelty—No: for the religion of nature is incomparably more ancient than the revealed; therefore not novelty. But remove the cause, *viz.* the many gross adulterations and corruptions ingrafted on Christ's gospel by self-interested and designing men, contrary to the moral attributes of God, and the effect will immediately cease.

But further, to ascribe novelty and singularity to such as are grieved, testifying, and bearing witness against the corruptions ingrafted on Christ's religion or law of reason, they may, with the same propriety, apply the love of novelty and of being singular in opinion to the first Christians, the embracers of christianity, and likewise to our first reformers, for detesting and rejecting the corruptions of the Romish church, the same as those whom they accuse as enemies to christianity. But the many gross absurdities ingrafted on Christ's church, by those who style themselves Christ's greatest and best friends, has been more hurtful thereto, than all its different enemies.

Hence, one fault, I acknowledge, in those against whom this author reflects, is, their including priests all under one and not under two distinct classes: for many venerable, good, and great men, are in that learned society and incorporate body. But the same fault I see in said author, with those whom he seems to accuse, is his vindicating the clergy of all denominations without distinction, or priests in

general, not dividing them into two different classes: for this order of men with whom he takes part (and of whom he himself is) and would vindicate, has certainly been not only the inventors of superstition, but even the corrupters of true and undefiled religion in all ages, of which the annals, monuments, and records, of both ancient and modern history, inform us, and are pregnant with; or if not by the clergy, *viz.* priests, from whence came the origin of superstition and the corruptions ingrafted on pure and undefiled religion to take place? or, By whom has superstition been imposed on the world, in all ages, but by priests? or, By whom were all the different oracles founded, and villanies carried on in deceiving the people, in tricking them out of both their souls and silver, but by the deceitfulness of priests? And also, By whom was the church of Rome, *viz.* Roman Catholics, corrupted, and by whom are they kept in superstitious darkness until this day, but by priests, *viz.* self interested and designing men?

Further, and by whom was Jesus Christ crucified and put to death? Was it not by the Jewish priests, under the influence, and at the instigation of the high or chief priests, at the head of that deceitful and infernal band? And also, by whom have sovereigns been accused, murdered, and put to death, but through the instigation of priests? And also, by whom were all the bloody scenes of barbarous cruelties carried on, in making the blood of Christians

run like water in the different persecutions of fourteen centuries past and upwards, but merely by the influence, and at the instigation of christian priests? and all, too, upon account of revealed religion, *viz.* the religion of priests, or pretended revelations of said gentlemen, imposed on the gospel. But never one drop of human blood was ever yet shed, or one soul put to death, on account, and by the friends of natural religion or law of reason—No, there never was. And as to the boasted of utility and advantages the world has gained by ecclesiastics, and credit deposited in these classical gentlemen, *viz.* priests, and of their having been entrusted not only with the records of nations, but even in the traditions of religious things of the utmost consequence and importance, that they were reposed in the priesthood is all granted; but, by whom was all this confidence committed to them? Only by the blind credulity of the world, after being reduced to beasts of burden by the artifice of said gentlemen.

Hence, by this time you will think I despise priests: this may be true, so far as they teach and act contrary to the moral attributes of God; but, on the other hand, I revere priests, so far as they respect the pure and undefiled simplicity of the gospel, and act conformable thereto, but no farther.

But further, priests, in order to deter and frighten people from believing in natural religion, asperse and brand all such as adhere thereto, with the epithet of deists, infi-

dels, free thinkers, and the like; but it is neither the defaming nor the approving such as are accused of infidelity, that will make the law of reason republished and taught by Jesus Christ, which is not only of moral, but of eternal obligation, either approved or disapproved, acceptable or unacceptable, in the sight of God; nor can it alter or abolish one jot or tittle of the indispensable and eternal obligation thereof—No, it never possibly can; for truth is always truth, exprest by whom, or be at the head thereof who will. For the religion or law of reason is not only wrote, but engraven, by the Spirit of the eternal God, on the heart of every human soul in its first formation; therefore is immutable and changeth not; and endureth, as its eternal author, who is the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Hence, no human soul can possibly condemn the law of reason, or religion of nature republished by Jesus Christ, after perverted and obscured by priests, but thereby condemneth the eternal God, the original fountain from whence it flows. If reason is corrupted, as reported by priests, and not to be trusted in matters of religion, how, or in what manner, are we to know or trust to what is exprest under the term revelation, whether of its being from God or not? If invalid to perceive in the one, it must, therefore, be, in every respect, just as incapable to judge in the other. Hence, we may, indeed, wilfully per-

vert reason; but if not pure but corrupted, as alledged by her accusers, the enemies of the God of truth, How, or in what manner, could reason accuse and condemn us for acting contrary thereto in the affairs of this present life? Be assured therefore, O man! in whatever freedom thou takes in accusing the law of reason, thou, in express terms, thereby accuseth the eternal God, from whence it flows. For it is, in every respect, just as possible for nature to exist independent of God, as to accuse reason, and not accuse God the author and fountain from whence it flows. But the express cause why we depreciate and accuse reason, is, because reason accuseth us to God in departing from her. But man has Jesus Christ for his example, who never accused reason, but highly approves thereof, as being the touchstone for trying all things. But let such who depreciate reason, behold what pitiful spectacles we are when deprived thereof.

Lastly, But we are told by some, we have no power to use reason; but, in answer to such, if we have no power to use reason, we can never possibly be accused by reason for the abuse thereof. In short, people may deceive themselves; but there is no excuse left for us to palliate, in the smallest respect, for its abuse.

To conclude, Christ invites all to examine his doctrines by reason; but priests exclude and forbid people to use or inquire into the truth thereof, by that unerrable guide. To which I shall add what is express by Dr. Sykes.

In his Essay on the truth of the Christian religion, page 204, he says, that "Whatever is called the religion of Christ, over and above his moral doctrines and precepts, is entirely useless, as mere unprofitable rubbish." And he wishes, "That christians would not vend, under the name of evangelical truths, the absurd and contradictory schemes of ignorant, wicked, self-interested, and designing men; and that they would part with the load of such rubbish, which makes thinking men sink under the weight, and gives by far too great a handle to infidelity," and what, in a great measure, may be supposed the express cause thereof.

Hence, with respect to the above, the difference betwixt natural and revealed religion is this. The religion of nature, or law of reason, is, in express words, what may be called the book of God, perfectly consonant with his moral perfections; but revelation, whatever part thereof is not conformable, but contrary thereto, is merely the religion of priests, independent of God. My advice, therefore, to families, children, and others of the human race, is to avoid and believe in no doctrines for truth, wherein God is made to contradict and thereby confound himself; and rely on none as acceptable to him, but what are perfectly consonant with his moral attributes: for whatever is contrary and not conformable thereto, is not only against, but offensive to God.

Of POSSESSIONS, and CASTING out of DEMONS,

JOHN X. 20.

*And many of them said, He hath a Devil, and is
mad; Why hear ye Him?*

“**H**E hath a devil, and is mad:” These are synonymous expressions; and the meaning is, he is out of his senses.

Hence, various are the accounts recorded by the Jews, of that which was used by exorcists in expelling and casting out of devils, or what they call demons, as may be gathered from the book of Tobit, Josephus, and others, besides that of the evangelists. But, not to dwell on the above, the following is the opinion of various learned men upon that subject; among whom is the pious and learned Mr. Joseph Mede, who observes, in a discourse upon this text, “That it is a matter of by far greater moment than what is generally thought of, from what property or character the names thereof, and many other things, are derived: for otherwise,” as expresseth by said author, “it will not come to pass. The same things presented to us under different names and notions, will not be taken to be the same they really are; even as he who meets a man,

well known to him, in some strange disguise, takes him to be some other person, though he knew him never so well before." And thus the great Mr. Mede thinks this to be the case, in regard to what is said in the New Testament about persons possessed of devils, or as it ought to be rendered demons: for he observes, in speaking thereof, "He could not but marvel, and suppose others must do the same, when they turn their thoughts upon it, that demoniacs or possessed of devils should so abound in and about the Jewish nation, who, according to the received opinion, were the chosen or peculiar people of God; and that, too, chiefly about the time of Christ: for in the time before, we find no mention of them in scripture. And the wonder is yet the greater, because it seems, notwithstanding thereof, according to the gospels, not to have been accounted by the Jews at that period any strange or extraordinary thing, but as a matter usual."

These particulars, which are not otherwise easy to be accounted for, made this learned divine conclude, that we are led into a false notion in regard to this matter, by means of the thing being represented to us under another name and notion than we at present conceive it by; which makes us take that to be a different thing, which, in fact, is the same as we are well acquainted with, but under a different name and notion. And he gives it as his persuasion, that these demoniacs, or possessed of devils, were no other than such as we call

madmen and lunatics; that is, those who, without having any other disease, are crazed or distempered in their brain; and such as were seized with epileptic fits, and whatsoever is properly called lunacy, such as these Jews believed to be troubled or acted upon by evil spirits; and therefore, passing by all other causes, they thought fit to give them their names from this, calling them, demoniacs, or possessed of demons or unclean spirits. An occasion of the more frequent use of which expression in our Saviour's time, and the times immediately before him, might perhaps be given by the sect of the Sadducees, who, after the time of Hyrcanus, had much prevailed, and affirmed (as St. Luke tells us, Acts xxiii. 8.) that there was neither angel nor spirit. To cry down which error, it is likely enough that the Pharisees and the rest of the Jews affected to draw their expressions, wheresoever they could, from angels and spirits; as we find they presently did, when St. Paul drew them to his side, by declaring himself to be "a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee," &c. "We find no evil," say they, "in this man; but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken unto him, let us not fight against God," Acts xxiii. 6, 9.

"Having thus sufficiently stated and explained my assertion (says Mr. Mede), now you shall hear what grounds I have for the same. First, therefore, I prove it out of the gospel itself, and that in the first place from this text of scripture which I have chosen for my text,

“ he hath a devil, and is mad;” where I suppose the latter words to be an explication of the former. Secondly, I prove it out of Mat. xvii. 14, 15, where it is said, “ There came
“ to Jesus a certain man kneeling down to
“ him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my
“ son, because he is a lunatic, and sore vexed :
“ for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and
“ oft into the water.” &c. Though this man’s son is here called only a lunatic, and by the description of him he appears to have been only troubled with such fits of epilepsy as deprived him of understanding &c. ; yet is he spoken of as a demoniac, or one possessed of a devil; for in the 18 verse, it is said, that “ Jesus rebuked the devil, and he departed from him: and the child was cured from that very hour.” And Luke ix. 39. It is said of the same child, “ Lo, a spirit taketh him, and he
“ suddenly crieth out, and it teareth him that
“ he foameth again, and bruising him, hardly
“ departeth from him.” By comparing of these places, says Mr. Mede, you may gather what kind of men they were, which the scripture calls demoniacs or possessed of devils; or as it should be rendered demons.” He further observes, that “ the Gentiles in those times (not being so well acquainted with the animal œconomy as we of these times) had the like apprehensions of their madmen, supposing them to be possessed, or actuated, by evil spirits, that is, by the souls of wicked men deceased; and this indeed seems to have been the notion of the Jews: for Josephus, in his se-

venth book of the Jewish war, mentioning these demoniacs, or possessed of demons, says, "These demoniacs are the spirits or souls of the worst sort of men deceased, which are gotten into the bodies of the living." The Turkish conceit of madmen to this day, is something of the same nature; but they suppose the spirit that works in them to be a good, rather than an evil one. Such absurd and false conceits as both of these, seem to have arisen from a supposition that such strange actions and symptoms as attend madness, could not arise from any natural distemper of the body; but must needs be the actuations of some demon or spirit. But since physic has been improved, and madness yields to remedies, it is evident that it is a mere distemperature of the body; as the methods of cure, which are often successful, are suited merely to the body as distempered; and consequently, could have no effect, if the disorder did not arise from the body being distempered, but from its being possessed by an evil spirit"

Mr. Mede afterwards proves by passages in the ancient church liturgies, in the ancient canons, and in other ecclesiastical writings, that the possessed of demons were nothing more than people of distempered brains, or madmen. Considering how inconsistent it seems with a divine providence, ruling over and superior to all, that devils or evil spirits should take possession of men, as if they were under their power, though the creatures of the supreme God. Nor is it to be supposed, that ever God

made use of the agency of such beings: for if he did, it could not but raise in the minds of men apprehensions of the power of these evil spirits, who could thus take possession of, and torment them; whereby that fear which is due only to God, would be, in a great degree, transferred to evil spirits. But to proceed;

With respect to possessions, and casting out of demons or evil spirits, it was the established belief of that people of their entering into the bodies of men; and also, of their being cast out and expelled therefrom after various methods. Nor was it among the Jews only, that there were those who were supposed to cast out demons or devils: for even among the Heathens, they had their exorcists, who were supposed capable of expelling evil spirits from those who were supposed to be possessed by them. And Plutarch tells us, that they advised those who were possessed to repeat the Ephesian letters. All which prove, that the casting out of devils was not then esteemed such an instance of divine power, that God should, as some suppose, give the devil more power over men about Christ's time than ever before, in order that the divine power might be manifested in expelling them; that such an effectual remedy being at hand, evil spirits were suffered to range abroad, and inflict grievous distempers upon men, especially in the land of Judea and near it, that the power of Jesus might be rendered more conspicuous, by shewing his authority over them; and re-

moving, by his word, those evils which they had inflicted, and causing those malignant spirits to leave those persons of whom they had taken possession. But those who suppose this to have been the case, ought to consider, that had it been so, we have all the reason in the world to conclude, that these evil spirits would have been let loose, only on the most flagitious persons; whereas those spoken of in the gospel as possessed, seem to have been well disposed persons; and in particular, one of the most grievous of this kind recorded in the gospels, is of one who had been possessed, from his very childhood (when he could have no sins to be punished for), even to maturity, see Mark ix. 21. And they who can think the all perfect being, the God of love, could permit an evil being to take possession of, and torment one of his innocent creatures, for so many years, on purpose only that Jesus might cast him out, entertain notions which do little honour to the Deity. It ought to be remembered, too, that these cases are not represented in the gospels as extraordinary, but are looked upon by every body, as ordinary and usual things. One expresseth a surprise that such people are brought to Jesus. His enemies never mention it as a reproach and dishonour to him, that their country was then infested with evil spirits. If people had been now on a sudden seized with disorders never heard of among them before, and if such cases had been numerous, would it not have occasioned the utmost astonishment? Would it not have

raised a loud and general clamour? Would they not have thought they had good reason to say, when they saw the cures performed by Jesus and his disciples, that there was a combination between them and some malignant powers? That they first brought them in among them into the country, and then they cast them out and drove them away again? but such a charge was never mentioned.

From what has been said, it appears, that whatever Jesus did in this way, would, according to the then received opinion, be attributed to a natural knowledge, and not a divine power. And accordingly we find, from the gospels, that when John sent his disciples to Jesus, to inquire of him whether he was the Christ, he bid them tell John, that "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed; the deaf heard, and the dead were raised," making no mention of his casting out devils, which, it may be supposed, he would have done, if the expelling them had been the most conspicuous instance of his divine power. And it deserves to be remarked, that the evangelist John, who, it is supposed, wrote expressly to vindicate the divine nature of Jesus, has not recorded one instance of his casting out devils, or given the least intimation on that head; and yet he expressly declares of the miracles he has recorded, that "They were written, that we might believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God;" which is a demonstration, that John thought there was no need of his

mentioning Jesus' casting out devils to prove his divine power. And, indeed, from what cause it proceeded, there were many among the Jews who pretended to expel demons or cast out devils, and who either by palming impostures upon the people, or by some other means, kept up a reputation this way. But there were none who pretended by a word or touch to restore sight to those who were born blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, firmness of nerves to the paralytic, limbs to the maimed, the power of walking to the lame, cleanliness to the leper; or to raise the dead to life, or to calm immediately the rage of a fever by their bidding, and cure the most grievous diseases of all kinds in an instant. And there being no pretenders to any thing of this kind, shews that these were considered as works of divine power; whilst what was termed the casting out of devils was not looked upon in that light, there were several pretenders to the art.

From what has been said, and from the example of St. John, who has not made the least mention of Jesus' power in this way, it is evident, that we may, without derogating from Christ, conclude, if we see reason to do so, that the demoniacs, or the possessed of devils, spoken of in the New Testament, were no other than either mad persons, or those afflicted with some very uncommon disorder, the cause of which was not then known. And certain it is, that if it can be proved that there is no true foundation for supposing that

the persons spoken of as possessed in the New Testament, were actually and really possessed by devils or evil spirits, a great stumbling block will be removed: for it must always appear strange and unaccountable, that the devils should have such power over God's creatures, as they are described to have in the gospels, if we suppose the persons there spoken of were actually possessed of devils: nor can it, indeed, be well reconciled to the all perfect, all powerful, all good, and all supreme administration of God over the world.

And furthermore, by proving that those spoken of as possessed in the New Testament, were not really possessed by any evil spirits, but only laboured under madness, or some uncommon disorder, a great foundation of superstition, cruelty, and imposture, as also of terrifying fears and idle absurd notions, altogether inconsistent with the belief of the administration of a divine providence over the world, will be eternally overthrown.

It is, therefore, a matter well worth the strictest inquiry, whether, from the consideration of all circumstances, there is not sufficient reason to conclude, that those spoken of as possessed by devils, were only distracted persons and the like, which we now know proceeds from the natural consequences of bodily indispositions, and not from the entering in of evil spirits. And this is what now remains to be done.—And, first, we shall observe, that all who know any thing of the history of mankind, know, that ignorance has ever been the

mother of superstition; and that every thing men have not been able to see the natural cause of, they have been apt to impute to a supernatural one. This has been the case even with regard to several works of art; and that has been deemed in one age the work of diabolical magic, which, in another, was universally known to be no more than the effect of natural knowledge.

This being the case, it is not to be wondered, that, with regard to the distempers of the human body, those, of which the cause was unknown, and the symptoms most strange, should be deemed supernatural. And accordingly we find, that anciently, before the inward parts of the animal body, and the properties of the blood and humours were sufficiently known, mankind in general (we speak here of the Gentiles not of the Jews), when any particular distemper had extraordinary and out of the way symptoms attending it, such as distortions or agitations, or such sort of affections as they could not account for, they imputed such diseases directly to demons, or the souls of deceased men.—Thus Homer, speaking of a man lying under a distemper in great pain, or a long while wasting, says, “a hateful demon had entered him.” The epilepsy was supposed to have its origin immediately from some one or other of the gods, according as its symptoms were stronger or less so; and was, upon that account, called the sacred disease. If the disordered persons grinded their teeth, if their right sides were convulsed, then the

mother of the gods was supposed to be the cause of the disorder: if the patient spoke sharper and stronger than ordinary, then Neptune was supposed to have afflicted him: if he did not retain his excrements, which often happens to those who are violently affected with this disease, then they said Hecate Enodia caused it: if the party foamed at the mouth and kicked with his feet, then Mars was supposed to be the occasion of the disorder; and Aretæus says, that it was believed that some demon had taken possession of those who laboured under this disorder. But while these were the common opinions, that prince of physicians, Hyppocrates, whose knowledge of the animal œconomy greatly surpassed all of his age, wrote a piece to shew that there was nothing in this disorder that peculiarly implied that any god or goddess was the cause of it; or that there was any thing else in it, but what was natural to man, it being owing to a natural cause, *viz.* too great a quantity of humours in the brain.

If from the Greeks we turn to the Romans, we shall find that they, too, imputed to certain spirits, certain disorders. When people, thro' the force of a distemper, were under such violent fears and horrors, as not to be masters of their reason at all, then they were said to be Larvati, or possessed by the Larva; by which they meant the souls of deceased men, who, on account of their ill deserts in life, were punished by a sort of banishment, by their having no good place of abode, but always ram-

bling about, vain terrors to good men, but to evil men noxious. When persons were frantic they were deemed Ceriti, that is, stricken or possessed by Ceres.—Thus we see, that ignorance of natural causes made men impute the disorders of the body, which were attended with strange symptoms, the immediate cause of which was not apparent, such as madness and epilepsy, to the effect of some god or demon. Now, certain it is, that many of the Heathen deities, to whom distempers were attributed, were nothing but mere imaginary beings, who never did exist at all; and therefore, could not be the cause of any such distempers: which shews, that all such notions were mere hypothesis and absolutely false, more especially as from the improvements made in physic, natural causes can now be assigned for all such distempers. And the late celebrated Dr. Mead gave it as his opinion, after above fifty years study and practice of physic, that of all the diseases with which miserable mortals are tormented, there are none so wonderful and dreadful to appearance, but may be the natural consequence of bodily indispositions. With respect to the Jewish people, health and long life being a part of their reward, for their obedience to the law given by Moses, and disease and death threatened to their disobedience (see Deut. xxviii. 21, 22.) it is not to be wondered at, that we meet with no account of any possessed in the Old Testament: for however much, from their ignorance in physic, they might then be at a

loss to account for the natural cause of some disorders; yet all sorts of diseases being threatened to them from the hand of God in case of their disobedience, they could, whenever they happened, look upon them in no other light, than as coming from his hand: for in regard to what is said of Saul's being troubled by an evil spirit, it does not appear as if it was intended to signify that he was actually possessed or molested by an evil spirit or demon, but only, that he was melancholy. For counsel and prudence in a man was, in the Hebrew language, usually stiled the spirit of God; and consequently, a person deprived of those qualities was said to be troubled with an evil or bad spirit. From Saul's servants advising a skilful player upon the harp to be got to cure Saul's disorder, and several other circumstances, it is plain, that nothing more is meant by that expression, than that he fell into melancholy, the fits of which returned upon him at uncertain periods, which is frequently the case in this sort of disease. But the Jewish people being captives for seventy years in Babylon or Chaldea, they appear to have strongly imbibed their notions concerning evil spirits, and their operations: they there found a religion which taught that there were two first causes; the first light, or the good god, and the other darkness, or the evil god; and that these two were alike concerned in the affairs of mankind: the one effecting good, and the other creating evil. No doubt there were

strange notions in a religion, whose very foundation was so absurd as this; and the Jews, it may be presumed, imbibed many of these strange notions, which seems evident enough from the book of Tobit, which appears to have been written by some Babylonian Jew; and is the first Jewish writing extant, that makes mention of evil spirits having power over the human species, to do to them according to their pleasure: for it is plain, that the evil spirit is there described as killing the husbands of Raguel's daughter, merely at his own will and pleasure, because he had taken a fancy to her.

After their return from captivity, the Jewish people, in general, seem to have been fond of ascribing many things to these evil beings which they had learned the notion of in Chaldaea; and attributed many diseases and disorders to these invisible agents. Every disease they did not understand, and the effects of which they could not account for, and they were withal very ignorant both in anatomy and physic, they attributed to their power, and supposed that some demon or other entered into, and possessed such persons; and in particular, they thought so of persons affected with madness, or the epilepsy, which is attended with violent fits, distortions, and convulsions; because they, not knowing how to account for the strange symptoms of these disorders, concluded they could not be the natural consequence of any bodily indisposition, but must be caused by some foreign agent,

which they concluded to be an evil spirit. These notions, then, of the agency of evil spirits prevailing, it is not to be wondered at, that the distempered persons talked themselves as if they were possessed, and really believed themselves to be so; and that sometimes, not only with one, but many unclean spirits, as the man in the country of the Gaderenes, who thought himself possessed with a legion of them. The power of the imagination is such, that it often, when the animal œconomy is disordered, impresses the mind with the most absurd, false, and impossible things, in as strange a manner as if they were really true. Dr. Mead relates, that he knew a man of letters, who positively asserted he was big with child, and was vastly anxious for a happy delivery; and that he saw two others, who, when alone, fancied they heard the words of people whispering them in the ear. A credible author relates, that he met with a woman who told him of numbers of devils in her, what this or that particular devil said, and what they desired to be done; and she asked if he did not hear or see the devils.

But further, with respect to this subject, man consists of soul and body; and instead of demons entering thereinto, as supposed by that people, it seems unsuitable to the wise methods of providence, that other spirits should enter into any man without his consent, and actuate and govern him. Real possessions seem inconsistent with the goodness of God.

If, indeed, there were any clear and undeniable evidence of such a thing, we should be willing to do our best to reconcile it to wisdom and goodness; but as there is not any clear and undoubted evidence of this fact, and the thing appears to be strange and shocking, we apprehend we may say, it appears to be inconsistent with the wisdom and goodness of God. For let any man think within himself, if it be not a strange and hard case, for a man to be put into the power of evil spirits; or for apostate angels, or other impure and wicked spirits, one or more of them, to be allowed to take possession of him, and to teaze and torment him as they think fit. Is this suited to that state of trial in which we now are? Is this a supposition that should be easily made or allowed of? Can we fairly reconcile this to the wisdom and equity of the divine government? Besides, from many things said in the gospels, it appears that divers of the persons there spoken of as having evil spirits, were not the worst of men; yea, for any thing we can perceive, divers of them were honest, virtuous persons. Some had laboured under those distempers commonly ascribed to evil spirits, from their youth, or from childhood, before they can be supposed to have been guilty of great and heinous transgressions. Another argument against possessions arises from the manner in which the persons, said to have unclean spirits, speak of our Lord Jesus Christ: for such persons did often bear an honourable testimony to our Lord. Luke iv. 41. "And demons

“ also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God.” But it is incredible that Satan, or any other evil spirit under his influence and direction, should freely and chearfully bear witness to our Lord as the Christ.

When the Pharisees reviled him, and said that he cast out devils, or what they call demons, by Beelzebub the prince of demons, our Lord confuted that reflection and charge, by shewing that the thing was very unlikely. So, in Matth. xii. 25, 28. and elsewhere. For the doctrine taught by our Lord being contrary to the kingdom and interest of Satan, it was altogether improbable that so subtil and malicious a spirit should concur with him for the support of it. In like manner, it is incredible that any unclean spirits should chearfully bear testimony to Jesus, as the Christ the Son of God; therefore, that profession or declaration did not proceed from such spirits, but from the unhappy diseased persons, who, under their melancholy affections, thought themselves to have demons in conformity to the prevailing opinion, though they had not.

This is a more reasonable way of accounting for this matter, than to suppose that evil spirits openly professed Jesus to be the Christ the son of God. This appears a very forcible argument: however, it may be here said, that possibly this testimony was not free and voluntary, but constrained and compelled. To which it may be answered, that this cannot be said with good reason. Our Lord certain-

ly did not constrain any such to bear that testimony to him: for he never received it, but disallowed of it, and checked it: though afterwards, when those persons were by his mighty power delivered from the indispositions under which they had laboured, he sometimes was not unwilling that they should bear witness to him, as we see in the case of the man in the country of the Gadarenes.

All those persons spoken of as having demons, or an unclean spirit, had some bodily indisposition; nor does it appear clearly from their history, that there was any thing besides such indisposition. That all these people had some bodily indisposition, is manifest, and cannot be denied by any. Some laboured under distraction, as the man in the country of the Gadarenes; others had other disorders. St. Peter, Acts x. 38. gives this general account of our Lord's miraculous works. "Who
" went about doing good, and healing all
" that were oppressed by the devil." Therefore, they who were supposed to be under the oppression of Satan, had distempers which our Lord healed. Observable are the words of St. Matth. chap. iv. 24. "And his fame went
" throughout all Syria: and they brought
" unto him all sick people that were taken
" with divers diseases and torments, and those
" which were possessed of demons, or demoniaes, and those that were lunatic, and those
" that had the palsy, and he healed them." These persons are reckoned up among other sick people, and they are said to be healed or

cured by our Lord when brought to him. Nor does it appear from the history of these cases, that there was any thing more than bodily indispositions, and that discomposure of mind, which usually accompanies them.

Hence, let us observe the history of the young man first brought to the disciples, when our Lord was in the mount; and then to himself when he was come down, which is related by the first three evangelists. Matth xvii. 14, 15, 16. "And when they were come down to the multitude, there came to him a certain man kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him." This is the whole description of the case. But undoubtedly the affliction was supposed to be owing to an evil spirit; therefore, the cure is thus related by the same evangelist. "And thus Jesus rebuked the demon, and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour," verse 18. In the description of this distemper, which appears to have been the epilepsy or falling sickness, the parent says his child was lunatic, and sore vexed; that is, his distemper was influenced by the changes of the moon; and the fits or paroxysms were more violent at some seasons than others. And does it not use to be so in such cases? What necessity is there, then, for the supposition of the agency or interposition of e-

vil spirits? in Mark ix. 17, 18. The same case is represented in this manner: "One of the
 " multitude answered, I have brought unto
 " thee my son, which has a dumb spirit: and
 " wheresoever he taketh him, he foameth,
 " and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth a-
 " way: and I spake to thy disciples that they
 " should cast him out, and they could not."
 Verse 20. "And they brought him to him:
 " and when he saw him, straightway the spi-
 " rit tore him, and he fell on the ground, and
 " wallowed foaming." It was a grievous e-
 pilepsy; a dangerous indisposition: the con-
 vulsions were sometimes extremely violent;
 so that, the young man had begun to pine a-
 way. In St. Luke ix. 38, 39. The parent
 says, "Master, I beseech thee look upon my
 " son; for he is my only child. And lo a
 " spirit taketh him, and he suddenly cries out,
 " and it teareth him that he foameth again,
 " and bruising him, hardly departeth from
 " him." Verse 42. "And as he was yet
 " coming, the demon threw him down, and
 " tore him: and Jesus rebuked the unclean
 " spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him
 " again to his father." It was a sad epilepti-
 cal disease; the convulsions were very violent.
 The fits were sometimes severe and long, in
 so much, that his friends feared he would ne-
 ver get out of them, but die away in them.
 Celsus a physician, and a very ancient writer,
 speaking of an epileptic person, describes him
 thus. 'The man all of a sudden falls down,
 ' foams at the mouth; and when the distem-

‘ per is new upon him, it makes him pine away.’ Hippocrates has given us the symptoms of the epilepsy more accurately.

‘ He becomes incapable of speaking, and is suffocated, and foam runs out of the mouth; his teeth gnash, the hands are close shut, and the eyes are distorted; he understands nothing; he falls down; he kicks with his feet.’ This is a direct exposition of the case before us, and shews the young man to be plainly epileptic. This, however, was a grievous and dangerous epilepsy; and the cure performed by our Lord was a great and gracious work.

There were some in ancient times, who were of opinion, that those called demoniacs, were diseased only. Undoubtedly, the other was the more prevailing opinion, but not universal. The Sadducees among the Jews, must have had different apprehensions about these cases. We shall, however, observe what is said by Origen, who lived about two hundred years after our Lord’s ascension. In his commentary upon St. Matthew’s gospel, treating of this miracle, he says, ‘ That physicians endeavoured to account for these cases in a natural way, not allowing the agency of any impure spirits, but calling them bodily distempers.’ So said physicians in those times; and they must be reckoned as good judges as any.

Plotinus, a celebrated Heathen philosopher, who flourished about the middle of the third

century, blames some who ascribed to demons diseases, which, as he says, may be accounted for in an ordinary way; and indeed are owing to fatigue, excess, indigestion, and other causes, either internal or external; and are oft-times cured by medicines. And Philostorge, an ecclesiastical historian, at the beginning of the fifth century, mentions one Posidonius a learned physician, whom he knew, who ascribed all the bad symptoms of those called demoniacs, to natural causes; and did not believe that demons had power to torment men, though he did not deny their existence. That Posidonius seems to have been a christian.

But it is objected, by those who believe the persons spoken of in the gospels to be really possessed, that they are always spoken of as distinct from diseased persons; and therefore they infer, that this could not be a disease. Dr. Whitby, an advocate for real possessions, seems to build the whole of his argument for them on this point, that they are always spoken of as distinct from diseased persons. But it is much to be wondered, that he and others did not reflect, that the evangelists, as well as the other Jews, supposing the reality of possessions, they could not do otherwise than speak of them as distinct from diseased persons: but this does not prove that they were not diseased persons, but only, that according to the received opinions of the times, and their own, the evangelists deemed that they were to be ranked under another class. Those who were

disordered in another way, the symptoms of whose disorders they could account for, they deemed and stiled diseased, or sick persons; but those whose disorders were more uncommon, and the symptoms of which, from their ignorance in physic, they could not account for from natural causes, they deemed possessed by demons; and consequently, spoke of them as distinct from the diseased or sick.

It is alledged, that diverse things appear in the history of those persons represented in the gospels as possessed, which are very difficult, if not impossible, to be accounted for, but upon the supposition of real possessions, or at least the interposition and operation of evil spirits.

First of all, it may be said, if there was no agency of evil spirits, how came it to pass that this opinion so prevailed as it did? and, How came it that many persons thought themselves to be possessed by evil spirits? The man at the tombs, when asked by Jesus what was his name, answered, "Legion; for we are many." And divers brought their children or other friends to Jesus, desiring him to have mercy on them, because an evil spirit afflicted and tormented them. To which may be answered, it is no uncommon thing for opinions to prevail in the world, which have no solid foundation. How many have been disposed to ascribe the diseases of the human body, and other disastrous events in the world, to the planets or other stars? It was for a

long time a very common opinion, that spirits of inferior orders in a manner filled the region of the air; and many distempers were ascribed to their influence. When such an opinion prevailed, it was very likely that some who fell under grievous distempers should think themselves harassed and tormented by evil spirits; and upon some occasions speak in conformity to their inward apprehensions. This particularly was the case of the man who called himself Legion; and perhaps of many others who were under a deep melancholy.

(2.) It is urged, how came these persons who are said to have evil spirits, to know Jesus to be the Christ, if they were not under the influence of evil spirits of great knowledge, as well as much power? "And there was in their synagogue (at Capernaum) a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, saying, Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the holy one of God." Mark i. 23, 24. Compare Luke iv. 33, 34. "And the two men in the country of the Gaderenes cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" Mat. viii. 29. To which it may be answered, that it is probable these persons knew Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God, in the same way that others did. The expectation of the coming of the Messiah had been, for some time, very common, and even universally founded

upon just interpretations of the ancient prophets, which were publicly read in the synagogues, and were in the hands of all men. These people, before they were seized with the disorders which they now laboured under, were well apprized of the common notions concerning the greatness of the Messiah, which were allowed by the Jews in general. We ought likewise to recollect, that none of the miracles recorded by the first three evangelists were performed by our Lord, till after the commencement of his public ministry; that is, the most public and open part of it. This is evident from St. John's gospel, compared with the rest. The first three evangelists say but little of our Lord's ministry, till after John was cast into prison; but before that, as St. John assures us, he had wrought divers miracles, and had begun to gather disciples. Moreover, some of the miracles recorded by the first three evangelists might be wrought, and some of our Lord's excellent discourses spoken by him, before any of those persons, said to have an unclean spirit, made acknowledgments of our Lord's great character.

The expectation of the Messiah being general, and John the Baptist having preached in the most public manner, and declared to all that the great person whom they looked for was at hand, and would soon appear among them; and our Lord beginning to speak as no man ever spake before, and doing many great and miraculous works, shewing forth his glory, and many believing on him, and

his fame being very great in Judea and in neighbouring places, no man could be altogether ignorant of him. It is therefore not at all strange that these diseased persons should, in their way, bear testimony to him. All those said to have evil spirits, as we readily perceive, were not discomposed in mind: many of them were epileptical, or paralytical. These undoubtedly enjoyed, at some seasons, the free use of their senses and understandings; and might discern the evidences of our Lord's great character; and, being sincere and honest, might be disposed to own it, and declare the sense of their minds. But thinking their distempers to be owing to the operation and influence of evil spirits, they affect to speak in their name.

As for the men in the country of the Gadarenes, who were disordered in their minds, and yet acknowledged Jesus to be the Christ, the thing may be thought more difficult; but as just said, before they were seized with that distemper, they were acquainted with the expectation of the Messiah, and the general apprehensions concerning his character; and before now they had heard of Jesus. Many who labour under that indisposition are honest and acute. They have also some intervals of ease: nor are they unreasonable in every respect; but setting aside some particular fancy, can reason and argue consistently enough. It therefore is not impossible, nor improbable, that some, labouring under this affliction, having heard of the fame of Jesus who was

much talked of every where, should think and then be disposed to speak honourably of him.

(3.) The escape of the man who called himself Legion from his confinement, it is urged, is a proof of the interposition of evil spirits of more than human power, and not to be otherwise accounted for: for the evangelist Mark says, that "No man could bind him, no, not
" with chains: for he had been often bound
" with fetters and chains, and the chains had
" been plucked asunder, and the fetters broken in pieces; neither could any man tame
" him," Mark v. 3, 4.

But the escape of such a person from his confinement needs not be reckoned so very extraordinary a thing, when it is well known, that persons, in the like disorders, have, at some seasons, uncommon strength. Moreover, it is to be supposed, that many do too much magnify the security with which that man had been confined. We are too apt, inconsiderately, to judge of former times by our own. It is likely that great improvements have been made in late ages in the method of treating people in that unhappy circumstance. Hospitals for the relief and cure of such as labour under this and other grievous distempers, may be said to be a christian institution. They owe their original to that benevolence, which christian principles inspire men with toward their fellow creatures. In these houses where there is constant attendance, the security must be much greater than in other places. Supposing there was, for some short season, a want of

attention to this person, the bands with which he was fastened, whether of mettle or cord, with his continual and violent motion, would fret and wear, and then break and burst asunder; and when he felt himself at liberty, his melancholic apprehensions would carry him to the desolate and solitary place where our Lord found him.

(4.) The loss of the swine is reckoned unaccountable, but on the supposition of a possession and interposition of many evil spirits. But it appears most probable, that this was done by the man himself called Legion, either alone, or with the joint assistance of the other, his companion in affliction: for this miracle was performed by our Lord with great deliberation. Some things may be reasonably supposed by us, which are not inserted in such a relation as this. When the people in the neighbouring city had been informed of the cure of this unhappy person, as St. Mark assures us, they came to see Jesus; and they saw him that was possessed with a demon, and had the legion, sitting clothed and in his right mind. Clothing therefore had been brought to him: but the evangelists do not say how it was procured; because, indeed, it is needless to relate particularly what may be easily supposed.

The distraction under which this man had laboured was very grievous and outrageous, and his action was very violent. When, therefore, he had conceived the thought of gratifying the evil spirits, by which he imagined himself to be possessed, with the destruction

of the swine, he would, without much difficulty, drive them off the precipice. If some few of them were put in motion, the whole herd would then follow: nor is it unlikely that the other person, his companion in affliction, joined his assistance; for St. Matthew speaks of two. They invested the herd, then, on each side, and thus drove them before them. This appears a much more reasonable way of accounting for the loss of the swine, than to suppose that our blessed Lord accepted and granted the petition of evil spirits. It appears from the description which the three evangelists have given of this man, that he was in reality crazed or mad; and accordingly, he acts and talks as such: for being asked his name, his answer was, Legion, for that many demons were entered into him: and yet Jesus in curing him, speaks in the singular, Come out, thou unclean spirit, and not in the plural, ye unclean spirits, notwithstanding the man had said he had a legion in him. We may therefore conclude, that his saying he was possessed by many demons, was nothing else but the man's imagination, and not the truth of things; for to cast out one demon, when a legion was in him, was indeed doing nothing. Supposing him to be a madman, nothing can be more natural than what passed: he addresses our Saviour openly, and without any fear or care, calling him the Son of God, and proclaiming him what he was. "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of

“ God Most High ?” It was easy for him to know Jesus, since his fame was spread in all those parts; and that made him address him in the manner he did. And it was as natural for him, considering him as a Jew, in his mad fit, to ask that the devils which were in him might be permitted to enter into the herd of swine, which he saw just before him: the sight of them would naturally put the odd image into his head. And when Jesus is said to permit them, or give them leave, in St. Matthew’s language, to say “ Go,” all this seems to be no more, than not concerning himself with the fantastic humour of a mad-man, but humouring him whilst he cured him. But it is said, Mark i. 34. that “ Jesus “ suffered not the devils to speak; because “ they knew him to be the Christ.” And Luke iv. 41. they are described as crying out, and saying, “ Thou art Christ, the Son of God.” In other places they are described as expostulating with Christ, saying, “ What have we “ to do with thee? Art thou come to torment “ us before the time?” Such expressions as these are thought, and indeed do seem, without a strict examination, to prove the reality of possessions. But upon a closer examination, we shall find that the evangelists impute that to the evil spirits, whereby they supposed them to be possessed, which was, in fact, only spoken by the distempered persons, who were thought, and who indeed imagined themselves, to be possessed. An instance of this in Mark iii. 41. proves this beyond doubt; for there

it is said, "Unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God." Now, no one can suppose that the unclean spirits themselves came and fell down at Jesus' feet. The meaning undoubtedly can be no more, than that the persons who had the disorders imputed to unclean spirits, did so. From this instance we may conclude, that all those passages which make the devils or evil spirits say any thing, or expostulate with Jesus, are to be understood, that the persons supposed to be possessed by devils spoke or expostulated in that manner; and therefore, when it is said that Jesus suffered not the devils to speak because they knew him to be the Christ, the meaning is no more, than that he checked or forbid those persons who were supposed to have been possessed, and whom he had cured, from openly declaring him to be the Christ, which they themselves were persuaded of. And this was no more than he did to his immediate followers, and even the apostles: for after they had made a confession to him privately, that they believed him to be the Christ, he charged them that they should tell no man that he was the Christ, that is, that they should make no open or public declaration of it; because that would have exposed him to have been laid hold of, and perhaps put to death, before he had fulfilled his ministry. It is therefore not to be wondered at, that Jesus should check or forbid both those, who, in their mad fits, from some

knowledge they had had before of Jesus, either by report or otherwise, declared him to be the Christ with an unguardedness and vehemency usual to such persons; and also, those who being cured did, in the warmth of gratitude, make the same unguarded declaration. St. Luke seems to speak of the declaration of those who had been cured, Luke iv. 41. "And devils came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God." And he, rebuking them, suffered them not to speak: for they knew he was the Christ." The meaning of this, when attentively examined, seems to be; that the mad persons being cured, they immediately broke out unguardedly into a declaration that Jesus was the Christ, having been persuaded before the distemper seized them that he was so. As to the expressions Jesus is represented as making use of in the cure of these persons, such as commanding the devils to come out, and his rebuking them, and the like, no more is to be built upon this for the reality of possessions, than there is upon what St. Luke says, that Jesus rebuked the fever of which Peter's wife's mother was sick, to conclude a fever to be a real person, or the winds and the sea, which, it is said, Jesus rebuked, saying, "Peace, be still." Besides, considering the conceived opinions of possessions, and that the diseased persons themselves actually thought so, it was highly proper Jesus should speak in that manner. To account fully for all the difficulties arising from the expressions, Mat. viii. 29. and

the corresponding places in the other evangelists, is something more hard. It has been already observed, that when the man said that a legion of devils was in him, this was nothing but the answer of a madman to our Saviour that asked him his name. It is generally supposed, that in this story, it was the devils which cried out, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" but there is no necessity for this construction; and it is plain that both St. Mark and St. Luke expressly describe this declaration to the man himself. St. Mark's words are, Chap. v. 6, 7. "When (the man) he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, and cried out with a loud voice, and said, I adjure thee that thou torment me not." St. Luke expresses himself in the very same manner. "When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee? I beseech thee torment me not," Luke viii. 28. St. Matthew relates this of two men; and therefore, consistently with his narration, he says, "Art thou come hither to torment us?" The reason of the man's or men making this request, seems to be, that they remembered the ill usage they had formerly met with, when they were bound with chains and fetters; and consistent with that notion, they beg of Jesus that he would not torment or vex them. The Greek word, which we interpret, to torment, signifies not only to torment in the way of punishment, or to extort the truth, but it is

used in general, in any way to vex, or to put to trouble; and figuratively, it is used in cases where it signifies no more than trying any thing, as with or by a touch-stone. In this place the sense is plain: the men who had felt the pain and anguish arising from being fettered and chained, desired that Jesus would not put them to that torment again.

There is another difficulty in relation to this story, and that is, it is said that the devils besought him that he would not command them to go into the deep, Luke viii. 31. St. Mark says, "He (that is the man) besought him much, that he (Jesus) would not send them away out of the country," Chap. v. 10. In some copies of St. Mark it is, "That he would not send him," that is, the unclean spirit, "out of the country." The lunatic had said that his name was Legion; that he had many devils in him; and he had desired, that those things in him, which he called devils, might enter into the herd of swine. These are instances of excessive madness, and that the disorder was in a high degree upon him. The request here made was another instance of the same kind, that Christ would not command them to go into the great abyss. Had he been in his right mind at this time, would he have desired the company of such malicious beings near himself, or near his neighbours? or, Would he not have desired them to have been sent into the deep, or any where else, rather than continue in his country? The history

of this cure seems to be this. When this man, who was not in his right mind, saw Jesus, he ran and worshipped him. Jesus, upon this, commanded the disorder to cease. Before this effect was produced, or while the madman was before our Saviour, he requested that Jesus would not command the devils (which were, as he said, many) that were entered into him to go into the deep; and seeing the swine there, he besought him that he would suffer the devils to go into them. This was all the effect of high madness, and natural; upon that supposition, it was as natural for such a man, or men, to run amongst the herd, and drive them down the precipice. Another difficulty in relation to this cure, is, that Matth. viii. 29. the madmen say to Christ, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" When it is asked, What time? the common answer is, "Before the time of the day of judgment, until which the evil angels are reserved under chains of darkness." 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude 6. But this passage may perhaps more justly and consistently be accounted for thus. "When the men saw our Saviour (known sufficiently thereabouts, and famed for curing all disorders), they cried out, "Art thou come hither," viz. into the country of the Gergesenes, unseasonably, sooner than was expected or desired, "to vex us?" Or, it may be, "Art thou come thus, after this manner, untimely, to torment us."

In regard to the case of Mary Magdalene, out of whom it is said, Luke viii. 2. there went

seven devils, or, as it should be rendered, seven demons, as no description of her case is given, we cannot, with certainty, conclude what was her particular affliction. But we may with reason suppose, that while she was under it, she imagined and said that she was possessed by seven demons, as the man in the country of the Gaderenes supposed himself possessed by a legion. And from this it is likely, it was of the melancholic kind. Nor is it at all to be wondered at, considering how prevalent the notion was of evil spirits entering into people's bodies, that she and many other hypocondriac persons should strongly fancy, that they had one or many evil spirits in them.

In regard to the woman mentioned by Luke, Ch. xiii. 11,—16. who is said to have had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and whom Jesus says, in the 16th verse, Satan had bound eighteen years, there is no appearance from the context, that it was any thing more than a natural infirmity. A spirit of infirmity is nothing but an infirm disposition, or habit, in the Jewish phraseology. And christian writers are full of the same manner of expression, applying to every vice, and every passion, and every disposition, the name of spirit. And as to the other expression, "Satan hath bound her," that word would have been used, whatever was the true cause of this indisposition, or whatever was the obstruction to her health. Satan is nothing else but *adversary*, and is to be understood according to the subject to which

it is applied. Thus Matth. xvi. 23. our Saviour says to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me;" that is, you are an adversary to the means by which God intends to erect his kingdom; and you talk as such. Peter here is called Satan, from his opposing the means of the christian dispensation. And so to be bound of Satan, when applied to an infirmity, means no more than that which was an adversary to health, be it what it would. The woman here seems to have been a devout, religious, good woman; she was in the synagogue before her cure, and as soon as she was cured, she glorified God. Our Saviour bears this testimony, that she was a daughter of Abraham; by which he meant to commend her for her faith and good disposition of mind. Why, then, should we imagine the devil, or prince of devils, to have been in her so many years? Might not one have grounds to think, that he would have perverted her mind and not her body? or have distorted her soul, and not have made her carcase crooked?

The next thing we shall take notice of, is the history of an affair at Ephesus, which is related, Acts xix. 11,—17. where we find these words, "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick, handkerchiefs, and aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and evil spirits went out of them. Then certain of the vagabond Jews,

“ exorcists, took upon them to call over them
“ that had evil spirits, the name of the Lord
“ Jesus, saying, We adjure you, by Jesus
“ whom Paul preacheth. And there were se-
“ ven sons of one Sceva a Jew, and chief of
“ the priests, which did so. And the evil spi-
“ rit answered and said, Jesus I know, and
“ Paul I know; but who are you? And the
“ man in whom the evil spirit was, leapt on
“ them, and overcame them, and prevailed
“ against them, so that they fled out of that
“ house naked and wounded. And this was
“ known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwel-
“ ling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all,
“ and the name of the Lord Jesus was magni-
“ fied.” This man is represented as speaking
as if he was actuated by some evil spirits.
Moreover, he shews great force and activity :
he alone overcomes several men at once. Ne-
vertheless, this is far from being any sufficient
evidence of the presence or power of invisible
beings. The knowledge which the man shews
is common and ordinary. St. Paul had be-
fore this time wrought many miracles at E-
phesus, in the name of Jesus, in curing all
kinds of diseases; and the man was convinced
of the truth and greatness of divers of the
works which he had either seen or heard of.
When, therefore, the Jewish exorcists came
to him, and made an attempt to give him re-
lief under the disease with which he was af-
flicted, and he found no benefit from all their
exorcisms, he was enraged, and treated them as
hateful deceivers; and says, “ Jesus I know,

“ and Paul I know, but who are ye?” No evil spirit under the direction of Satan, the prince of evil spirits, would bear such testimony to Jesus and his apostles. But it is the honest understanding man, who expresses the sense of his own mind. There is one thing more to be taken notice of by us, it seeming to some, one of the strongest proofs in the New Testament in behalf of real possessions, *viz.* the relation which is given in the Acts of the Apostles, Chap. xvi. 16. of what happened at Philippi in Macedonia. “ It came to pass, as we went to prayer,” it might as well be rendered, as we went to the oratory, or the Jewish synagogue, a little way out of the city by the river side, “ a certain damsel, possessed with
“ a spirit of divination, met us, which brought
“ her masters great gain by soothsaying. The
“ same followed Paul, and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the Most
“ High God, which shew unto us the way
“ of salvation. And this she did many days.
“ But Paul being grieved, turned and said to
“ the spirit, I command thee in the name of
“ Jesus to come out of her. And he came
“ out the same hour.” A certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination, literally, having a spirit of Python. St. Luke undoubtedly makes use of the common Heathen appellation; and the phrase seems to denote, that this woman was supposed to have the same spirit of Python, or Apollo, that delivered oracles in the name of Apollo in the Pythian temple.

In short, by the help of this maid servant, her masters were supposed to be able to deliver out oracles, and to answer all manner of questions, and foretel future events concerning those who consulted them. Such things were common in Heathen countries, not only carried on by the priests in the temples of the deities, but also by others in other places. But there is good reason to believe, that all those oracles in general were cheats and impostures, the effects of human skill and contrivance only. There was, in all probability, a like cheat and imposture in this case; but it may not be easy to say exactly wherein the imposture consisted. The masters of this maid, we may conclude, were artful and deceitful; but possibly the woman was honest. If she had once been otherwise, she was seized with compunction, when she declared Paul and his companions to be servants of the Most High God. But that would not cure her distemper; for some distemper she had, which Paul removed. It seems not improbable, that this woman laboured under some indisposition, possibly some kind of melancholy, which was imputed to the influence of a demon; and particularly to Apollo, as was common among the Heathen people. The masters, pretending that hereby she was able to resolve all manner of questions, set up an oracle at Philippi, and delivered out answers, as if received from the spirit of Python. And their project was carried on very artfully, in so much that they had a good deal of employment, and many inquiries, and made

great gain. But the maid being honest, or at least well disposed, and hearing of Paul, and of what doctrine he taught, and what works he performed, or perhaps out of curiosity, attended at a distance, and making inquiries after him, she was convinced; and then openly declared, that he and his companions were servants of the Most High God. But she, having often followed Paul, and he not valuing such a testimony, and being touched with compassion for the maid under her melancholic affection, adapted his expressions to the common opinion about her, and the spirit came out the same hour. This appears to have been the case. Nor can it be thought that a spirit of Python should publicly say what tended to diminish a regard for himself, and all Heathen deities in general. Many there are, indeed, who still think this woman had a spirit of divination; and that she was able to foretel futurities. But there are many arguments which might be alledged, that the Heathen oracles, and such as were said to speak by the spirit of Python, and all pretences of foretelling futurities, and the like, were the impostures of artful men, without the assistance of spirits of any kind. And what has been said on this subject, seems to put it beyond doubt; for they continually represent Heathen idols as altogether insufficient and vain.

After all this, can any christian believe that Heathen idols had either power or knowledge? Can we think that by invocation, aerial, invisible beings were brought to reside in images

of hollow brass, or solid marble; and that they thence delivered answers to such as sought to them? Such was, indeed, the persuasion of Heathen people; but it was a mere delusion appertaining to their superstition, for which they were derided by the primitive christians.

Some learned men among christians have supposed, that the young women at Philippi, whose case we have had under our consideration, who is said to have had a spirit of divination, had extraordinary knowledge. They say that she prophesied; that she could discover lost goods; and reveal what happened in distant places; and do many other things of like nature. But their opinion is confuted by the text in Isa. viii. 19.: for she is one of those, who are particularly mentioned by the prophet as having a familiar spirit, or spirit of Python, and muttering, that is, speaking as out of the belly or breast.

Hence, we have only to add, that it is no wonder that the opinion of possessions should continue in the christian church. The converts, both Jews and Gentiles, brought (together with the mystical way of interpreting scripture) as many of their old superstitions over with them to their new religion, at least, as they could think consistent with it.

Thus have we examined into this matter with a view to truth, that error may not hold its place. And, let it not be imagined that we have thereby depreciated our Lord's divine power, wherewith he was endued from on

high, let the case be what it will: for this cannot be disputed, that our Lord's restoring a distracted person instantly to right reason, with only a word speaking, is a much greater proof to us of divine power, than his casting out a devil or evil spirit; for that can prove no more to us, than that Christ was superior to the devil or evil spirit: but of what power that was possessed we know not; and therefore, can form no judgment what power was necessary to cast it out. But the giving reason and understanding in an instant, by a word speaking, is a work that we are sure requires no less than divine power to perform. And it cannot be denied, but that evil spirits taking possession of mens bodies seems to be inconsistent, and irreconcilable with a divine administration; and, as it were, to derogate from, and clash with that dominion which God exerciseth over the earth.

Hence, nor can I properly conclude this subject, without remarking some of the principal instances of the brutish credulities of that ignorant, infatuated, foolish, and superstitious, people, which are. In the book of Tobit, we read that when the angel, in the form of Azarias, told the good and pious Tobias that he should marry the daughter of Raguel, Tobias answered, "I have heard, brother Azarias, that this maid hath been given to seven men, who all died in the marriage chamber. And now I am the only son of my father, and am afraid, lest if I go in unto her, I die as the others before: for a wicked spirit loveth her,

which hurteth nobody but those which come unto her; wherefore, I also fear lest I die." Here it appears plain, that the writer of the book of Tobit supposed that evil spirits could act of their own will; for the reason he assigns for the husbands of Raguel's daughter dying in the marriage bed-chamber, is, a wicked spirit loving her, who therefore hurted those which came unto her as husbands. The book of Tobit is, no doubt, in a great part fictitious; but the writer appears to have been a pious good man; and we may learn from it what were the prevailing notions about evil spirits in those times: for it cannot be supposed but that the writer wrote according to the then received opinions. The evangelist Mark, giving the account of the man whom Jesus dispossessed of a devil, in the country of the Gadarenes, tells us, that "When Jesus was about to depart from thence, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him," being afraid, as it is likely, and as most commentators suppose, that the devil would take possession of him again, if he quitted the side of Jesus.

But further, supposing the demoniacs, spoken of in the gospels, to be really possessed by devils, their power was made visibly apparent to mens eyes, which could not do less than raise in their minds awful apprehensions of them, and make them be thought of as though they shared power with God in this world; and that the happiness of men depended upon their good pleasure, as well as God's. Thus,

in the book of Tobit, no less than seven men, in all probability worthy ones, are represented to be slain, because an evil spirit had taken a fancy for Raguel's daughter, and would not let any man come unto her as a husband; and neither the piety of Tobias nor of Raguel, was thought by themselves, or others, to be of any avail against the fury of this jealous spirit: for though the match with Tobias was entirely agreeable to the law of Moses, he being the very person that ought to have married her, yet Tobias was afraid of being slain by the evil spirit; and Raguel made so little doubt of it, that he ordered his servants, in the morning, to dig a grave ready for him; and none of the family expected he would be found alive. Thus in the book of Tobit, the evil spirit, which haunted the daughter of Raguel, is said to be driven away by the smoke of the heart and liver of a fish; which smell, when the evil spirit had smelled, he fled unto the utmost parts of Egypt.

And further, let us hear what Josephus, a Jewish priest, and a very learned man, and who lived near to our Saviour's time, says of this matter. Having in the xxvth chapter of the seventh Book of the Jewish war, described the castle of Macharerus, he says, 'On the north side of this city is a valley, in which is a place called Baaras. It bears a plant of the same name. This root (says he) is very desirable for the sake of one virtue: for demons, as they are called, who are the spirits of wicked men, entering into the living, and

‘ killing those who have no help, this root presently expels, if it be only brought near to those who are diseased.’ In his Jewish antiquities, speaking of Solomon, ‘ God also gave him understanding, to attain to skill against demons, for the benefit of mankind. For having composed incantations, whereby diseases are removed, he also left behind him certain kind of exorcisms, whereby demons may be expelled, so as never to return again. And this method of cure is effectual (or prevails much) among us to this day. For I saw one Eleazer, my countryman, in the presence of Vespasian and his sons, and many tribunes and other soldiers, deliver men who were seized by these demons. The cure was in this manner. Applying to the nostrils of the demoniac a ring, having under the seal one of those roots of which Solomon taught the virtues, he drew out the demon at the nostrils of the man that smelled it. The man presently falling down, he mentioned Solomon, and reciting the charms composed by him, he adjured the demon never to return any more. Moreover, Eleazer being desirous to satisfy all the company that he had that power, he placed a little way off, a cup full of water, or small vessel, in which the feet are washed; then he commanded the demon, as he went out of the man, to overthrow it, that all present might see and be sensible he had left the man. This being done, the wisdom of Solomon was made manifest.’ This story is so ridiculous, that

we may conclude, that Eleazer was an impostor, and the whole affair artifice and delusion. But these passages shew, that the supposed expelling of devils or demons was not then thought any proof of divine power in the person who performed it; nor indeed any thing miraculous, but attained by natural knowledge only. We may further learn, from the first passage of Josephus which we have quoted, that they supposed demons, who entered into men and took possession of them, to be the spirits or souls of wicked men; and from thence it may be concluded, that this was the general opinion at that time.

And further, see also as recorded of Job, in speaking of the misfortunes that befel him in life, we are told he lost his sons, his daughters, his sheep, his camels, his oxen, his asses, even all his substance; and was at last himself smote with sore boils. And all too, we are told, was effected merely by the agency of the devil. Strange! yea, very strange indeed! that God should admit of the devil to torment and afflict mankind, not only the worst, but even the best of men, upon the devil's interceding and bringing false accusations against them for retaining their integrity. Hence, but what will the want of knowledge and ignorance not believe and establish for divine truth?

But the origin from whence this metaphysical empire of invisible beings, *viz.* of good and bad spirits, or genies, *viz.* devils, demons, spectres, and others of like nature (so much talked of by priests, and those who

believe therein through the influence of said gentlemen) derived its birth, was from Zoroaster the first, the great Persian magi; from whom it became the established belief of that people, which lay beyond the east of Arabia, the country wherein Job lived; and was divided therefrom only by the Euphrates, *viz.* the Persian gulf. Hence, a belief therein was early communicated by that people, *viz.* the Persians, to the Arabians, among whom Job was an inhabitant; and was, no doubt, much believed in, as recorded in that book. The magi, or magicians, of whom we now speak, were a very ancient, and religious sect in Persia and other eastern nations. They maintained, that there were two principles; the one the cause of all good; the other the cause of all evil. They abominated the adoration of images: worshipped God only by fire, which they looked upon as the brightest and most glorious symbol of Oromasdes, or the good God, as darkness is the truest symbol of Arimanius, or the evil god. This religion was reformed by Zoroaster the second, who maintained, that there was one supreme, independent being, and under him two principals or angels; one the angel of goodness and light, and the other of evil and darkness; that there is a perpetual struggle between them, which shall last to the end of the world; that then the angel of darkness, and his disciples, shall go into a world of their own, where they shall be punished with everlasting darkness; and the angel of light, and his disciples, shall also go into

a world of their own, where they shall be rewarded in everlasting light.

This sect still subsists in Persia and other eastern nations, under the denomination of Gaurs, where they watch the sacred fire with the greatest care, and never suffer it to be extinguished. Hence, they are a poor, harmless sort of people; zealous in their superstition, rigorous in their morals, and exact in their dealings. They profess the worship of one god alone, the belief of a resurrection and a future judgment, and utterly detest all idolatry. They have the same veneration for Zoroaster that the Jews have for Moses, esteeming him a prophet sent from God.

And further, a belief in demons, *viz.* devils or evil spirits, and power thereof over men, is what has been of great advantage to priests in all ages: for without which, these gentlemen could have had little or no bread. All denominations and religious sects are afraid of demons, *viz.* devils; and it has been of great use to the interest of these gentlemen, *viz.* priests, in defending the laity against their abuse, or from being hurt thereby. Demons are often worshipped, as the evil god or gods, by nations in their savage state, to prevent their being hurt thereby: for the more ignorant people are, the more afraid of devils, and of their being invested with a power to hurt and destroy them. And it is a well known maxim, that among savages, the first notions of supernatural powers arose from fear. It is observed by some, even of the greatest

authors, that the more ignorant, and the more imperfect notions people had of God, the more dread and belief they had in evil spirits; and the more perfect ideas they had or could perceive and form of God, did the dread and belief therein vanish.

But further, with respect to the above, let us not be afraid of the devil, nor of God's permitting him to be hurtful to the sons or children of men, as believed by that superstitious people, the Jews, and others as ignorant as themselves: for the Jews believed there was an empire of devils, or what they call demons; and that Beelzebub, their chief, had the command, and was prince thereof. For when Christ healed such as were troubled and afflicted of whatever disorder, which they supposed to be possessed of demons, they said, "He casteth out devils, by Beelzebub the prince of devils." Thus they believed, that as Beelzebub had the command, and was head thereof, and that they rose only in gradation to the state of that prince, they perceived of each thereof being subject to obey at his command; and whenever the charge was given for them to depart, they immediately went out, as appears evident from Christ's reply to that people in casting out of devils. "If I, by Beelzebub, cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? This tells us, that cures were made by that people, in healing diseases, and restoring to health, in what they called casting out of devils, though perhaps not instantaneously, the

same as Jesus. Now, if a lesser or weaker devil was only cast out by a stronger, this would have been no mark of divine power in Jesus, like that of healing and recovering them from distress by a word.

From which we may conclude, that what they call possessions, and casting out of devils, was nothing else than mere distempers or disorders, such as recorded in treating upon this subject; and were healed thereof by Jesus. All of which may teach us, that what they call devils, or rather demons, were nothing more than diseases; such as to what people are subject, and are exposed to unto this day.

The belief of these imaginary beings, of their dominion, and being hurtful, as in the above, was first communicated and received by the Jews, when captives in Babylon, from the Chaldeans; and they from the Persians, which lay on the confines and border of that country.

Hence, the blending and ingrafting the above absurdities with that of Judaism, on the gospel, as if weak, imperfect, or incomplete, and stood in need of which in support thereof, has been of more loss, and hurtful to Christ's religion, than all its profest enemies.

The apostles themselves, with others by whom the absurdities were conveyed (of devils, *viz.* demons, and of people's being afflicted and tormented thereby) and who actually believed therein for truth, are an incontestable evidence of their fallibility, ignorance, and want of real knowledge, in what

they either spoke or wrote, the same as other men; and of their being as blind through the prejudice of the times, as others of that people who believed therein as well as they. For it is visible, from what we are told both of Tobias and others, that piety was no proof against believing in these absurdities. We may, therefore, very justly conclude, that for priests to require of people to believe therein, as literally expressed in the New Testament, is, in express words, a downright insult upon the understandings of men; and also, an usurping of God's prerogative over the consciences thereof. But what need I thus speak, for we have by far too many instances of the world being gulled out of their senses by priests, in all ages thereof; by which it has been made to groan, through their defacing of human nature, to the loss of all true religion, or just notions of God. For if the apostles had been infallibly inspired with knowledge in what they spoke and wrote, they, from said inspiration, had never possibly conveyed such absurdities to posterity, as have been made legible in the above; which may fairly teach us, the necessity of an allowance being granted for the prejudice of education, to which all mankind are liable, in a more or less degree.

From hence, I would to God that reason had liberty to judge in matters of religion; and that priests would submit to just and unbiassed reason as their unerring guide therein: for without which, we must, like a ship, without a compass, rudder, and pilot to direct, be

left to wander in the dark, and perish in our own ignorance. But remember this, O man! that refuseth and giveth up being directed by reason, that it will be a swift and irresistible witness against thee at last, when none shall be able to accuse or take part with thee against it. Let us be careful, therefore, in all things to which we adhere for truth, to suspend our belief therein, till once we have thoroughly examined the circumstances on which the authority thereof depends, lest by trusting thereto we deceive ourselves: for he that believes in any one thing, before he first examines the evidences on which it depends, is a fool.

From hence, let us not be afraid to believe and receive the gospel conformable to the moral attributes of God, and to eject from thence whatever is averse and not agreeable thereto, such as a belief in possessions and casting out of demons, which was nothing more than inveterate disorders, and the healing thereof; and with these a belief in personal or particular election, and of all the actions, whether good or bad, of the human race, being preordained and absolutely decreed of God; which, if predestinated, as in the above, a criminal, if subjected to the performance of the action for which he is indicted, if the evidences shall turn out to his condemnation, the judge's passing sentence against him, and requiring it to be put in execution (if absolutely decreed, and thus subjected to the performance of said action) would be murder in cold blood; therefore unjust; because he being absolutely

destinated thereto, could not possibly resist bringing it to pass. But man being a free agent, and possessor of power to resist sin, makes the sentence just and lawful when executed upon him.

And further, with regard to a belief of Christ being God, this subject, with others, having been sufficiently inquired into, I shall just barely remark what has been expressed thereon concerning the deity, by some learned and great men. One of which; when speaking thereof, says, 'The nature of the divine being is so far out of our reach, that we must be absolutely at a loss to apply to it unity or multiplicity. And though this property is applicable to individual things, we know not if it is applicable to the deity; yet, if we may venture to judge of a matter so remote, we ought to conclude in favour of unity.' And adds 'We perceive (says he) the necessity of one eternal being; and it is sufficient that there is not the smallest foundation from sense, or yet reason, to suppose more than one.' *Lord Kaimes on Deity.*

Another, in speaking upon this sublime subject, says 'What is God? God (says he) is an absolute, all perfect being, who made and governs the universe.' And further, upon inquiring into which, he adds 'Are there more gods than one? (reply) One is sufficient. Which sufficiency of one destroys the necessity of more.' But to return,

With respect to Christ's religion, after having ejected therefrom the alloy of priests, *viz.*

self-interested and designing men, let us confine our belief therein to the above infallible test, the moral attributes of God: for if we exceed the bounds thereof, we are certainly offensive to him. For if God is limited thereby, of which we can have no doubt, we ought not to exceed, lest we offend and become obnoxious to him. For the law of reason, or religion of nature, republished and taught by Jesus Christ, conformable to the above test, is eternal; therefore of indispensable obligation, and changeth not, the same as God, its eternal author, "With whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning: the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Now, may the gospel be therefore expunged of all its impassable and unprofitable mysteries, and of whatever is contrary to its great and illustrious founder. And may such as hold the gospel in unrighteousness, see and be convinced of their mistake, repent and turn therefrom unto God, before it be too late, that he may graciously forgive.

Lastly, And to conclude; by this time, I apprehend, such as believe and receive all their opinions merely upon trust, will suppose I am culpable, in using so much freedom in pointing out these, with other defects in our religion (conveyed to us by the apostles and others in their name, with that of Judaism), and of its being corrupted from said cause lying latent therein, when none complains thereof: but, in answer to such, if the state were convulsed, would you suppose a person culpable,

if he should point out the defect, in order that the cause might be removed, and thereby prevent its dissolution? But the reply is, 'Our religion is not convulsed; nor does any person complain thereof but yourself.' But, in answer to which reply, if not convulsed, from whence, then, arise all those different divisions, by which it is now become so much divided, contrary to Christ's commandment? Could an effect exist without a cause? No.

Hence, and if no man complains, the greater is the necessity to point out the evil of which no person seems to be aware, that all may see it; therefore, instead of being culpable, it does thereby actually merit the grateful reward, and just esteem, of every human soul concerned therein, that wishes to be instructed in the knowledge of Christ's religion agreeable to the will of God.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Page 17, l. 1, *read*, in all parts, &c. P. 21, l. 26, after, men. *read*, who attended thereon. P. 97, l. 13, after, warming, *read*, themselves with, &c. P. 133, l. 11, after, to? *read*, Hence, every breach of verbal contract ought to be exacted at five *per* cent, or more, to indemnify the party observing. As to, &c. P. 173, l. 3, after, say, *read*, on account of their vices testifying against them, or rather with, &c. P. 231, l. 18, for through, *read*, though. P. 278, l. 6, after, reasonable, *read*, natural, and, &c. P. 292, l. 22, after, being, *read*, gulled out of their senses, and reduced, &c. P. 298, l. 5, for these, *read*, the.

